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* **GOLD INGOTS IN EVERY HOME:** A little-known legend of India.

* **LEFT! RIGHT!!** No, this is no marching order, but has something to do with the way we should handle English! A bunch of refreshing stories and all the regular features.

**GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE**

त्रिविधं नरकस्योदं द्वारं नास्त्यन्मात्मनः ।

कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतन्मयं त्रयोद्वारम् ॥

*Trividham narakasyedam dvāram nāstyanamātmanaḥ
Kāmaḥ krodhasatahā lobhastasmādetattrayam tyajet*

Three are the gateways of hell, responsible for bringing about the spirit's ruination: lust, anger and greed.

The Gita

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Founder:

CHAKRAPANI

THE DIWALI SPIRIT

It is significant that the Festival of Dusserah is followed by Deepavali or Diwali, the Festival of Lights. The first commemorates the victory of the good over the evil; the second celebrates it with light, light being the symbol of both joy and knowledge.

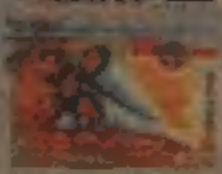
The knowledge that falsehood cannot ultimately triumph is age-old. The principle applies to big issues as well as small issues in life. We carry in this issue a rather long story retold from the Arabian Nights—*The Two Companions*, as a special Diwali feature. It shows how since long it has been believed that even in our relationship we ought to be truthful to one another. For, the plank of falsehood on which one stands may slip any moment!

Thoughts to be Treasured

Healthy, well-informed, balanced criticism is the ozone of public life.

—Mahatma Gandhi.





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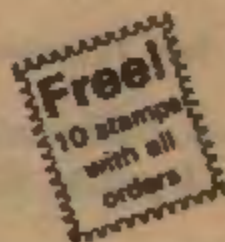
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NEWS FLASH



THE BIGGEST JAWS!

The fisherman who helped the popular movie Jaws, has caught the biggest white shark ever captured, off the Long Island coast. The monster shark weighs 1,570 kg.

QUAKES—INSIDE AND OUTSIDE

If Mrs. Charlotte King (34) of Oregon calls the Government Emergency office over the phone and says that she has a headache the officer knows that an earthquake is coming. Yes, six times it has happened. Her splitting headache is followed by an earthquake. The doctors say that she is highly sensitive to earth movements.



THE SWIMMING CAR

A Californian firm has invented a car that can run on water as naturally as it can run on the road.

THE SNOW LEOPARD

The snow leopard which was thought to be an extinct species, has been recently sighted in Kulu. As the snow-leopard skin fetches high fancy price, vigil has been stepped up to guard them against poachers.



DID YOU KNOW?

DID YOU KNOW?
DID YOU KNOW?
DID YOU KNOW?
DID YOU KNOW?
DID YOU KNOW?
DID YOU KNOW?
DID YOU KNOW?



Shakespeare's daughter was illiterate.

The world's largest bronze statue is that of the Buddha in Japan, weighing 452 tons.



In America there are eight towns bearing the name Rome.

A queen bee may lay as many as three thousand eggs in a single day.



The Sahara desert has an area as large as Europe.

The people of Iceland read more books than any other people in the world.



STORY OF

RAMA

—By Manoj Das

(Rama, Sita and Lakshmana were camping at Panchavati. Surpanakha, a demoness, attempted on Sita's life in order to win Rama. Lakshmana punished her. The demoness appealed to her brother Ravana, the demon-king of Lanka, to avenge her humiliation. At Ravana's instance a crafty demon assumed the form of a deer and attracted Sita's attention. As Sita desired to have it, Rama followed it. Struck by Rama's arrow, the demon cried out for Lakshmana. Sita obliged him to go in search of Rama. Ravana then kidnapped Sita. The great bird Jatayu tried to rescue Sita but was mortally wounded.)

IN SEARCH OF SITA

Rama was surprised to see Lakshmana coming towards him. Lakshmana himself was feeling guilty over his action, but what else could he do? How could he have stood quiet at the hut when Sita questioned his love for his brother?

"No, Lakshmana, in spite of

Sita's impatience and rude words, you should not have deserted her. Don't you know that this region is full of treacherous demons?" Rama softly scolded Lakshmana.

The two brothers hurried towards their hut. Rama took note of birds making abnormal



screeches and deer running about in an excited way. The forest seemed to have suddenly lost its grace and serenity.

"I expected this," said Rama with a sigh when they looked into their hut and found Sita missing. Soon his eyes grew red. He cried out for Sita. At that the trees seemed to point their branches towards the south and the deer looked again and again upward at the sky and ran towards the south.

Lakshmana tried to pacify Rama. "Sita loves the forest. She might be enjoying a stroll on the banks of the lake abounding in lotuses or the river

crisscrossed by swift bright fishes. Or she might be hiding only to scare us," he said.

But Rama was not consoled. "Let us take the hint given by these faithful and innocent creatures," he said drawing Lakshmana's attention towards the movement of the deer.

"O green trees, O blue hills, Sita was your admirer. Couldn't you guard her? Can you at least tell us where she is?" Rama cried out looking in all directions. Ominous spells of silence followed his cries.

They followed the deer. They had not gone far when they saw some flowers scattered on the



ground. "These adorned Sita's locks. Evidently she has been dragged away by someone—a demon or a supernatural being. Is she still alive? Lo, there is blood on the grass—and some bejewelled ornaments too. Since the ornaments are not Sita's, they must be her kidnapper's!"

Rama had just said this when his eyes fell on the dying Jotayu.

"I wonder if this creature is not the demon" said Rama ■ he raised his bow.

The bleeding Jotayu blinked and, in ■ faint voice, said, "I'm the witness to the plight of the divine Sita. I did my best to save

her from Ravana's clutch. I damaged his chariot, smashed his crown and vest and gave him ■ stiff fight. But once he cut down my wings, I ■ undone. I'm about to die. You need not kill me."

Rama sat down and embraced the bird. "O noble Jotayu, how did Sita look in her plight? Did you find her composed enough to withstand the ordeal? Who is this Ravana? What wrong had I done to him?" Rama asked anxiously.

"Ravana is the son of Vishrabha ..." began Jotayu. But that is all he could say before breathing his last.



Rama shed tears on the bird who martyred himself for Sita's sake. Then he and Lakshmana cremated his body and performed his last rites in the river Godavari and offered food to hundreds of birds over the green meadow.

They marched farther southward. Suddenly, from a thick area of the forest they heard a voice the like of which they had never heard. It was creepy and appalling. Next moment they saw two dreadful hands emerging from the wilderness. Before they could see the creature proper, they had been caught in his grips.

Their surprise knew no bounds when they saw the creature with the pair of longest hands ever heard of. The creature had other specialities too. He had no legs and no head. He was made up of just his trunk, though lurid outlines of a mouth and nostrils and eyes could be seen on his chest and belly.

"Brother, this creature's sole strength is in his arms. Let us cut them before he crushes us," said Lakshmana.

Rama agreed with Lakshmana's proposal. Simultaneously their swords moved. The abominable creature lost his hands. With a piercing cry he stepped



back and then fell down.

"Who are you brave young men?" he asked with fear and respect in his voice. For years his long hands had reached the nooks and corners of hills and dales and had taken hold of birds, beasts and men. While his sight paralysed human beings, his squeeze killed all. He ate them merrily. Nobody had dared to attack him.

Lakshmana went near him and answered his question. The strange creature made some gurgling sound of happiness. "Once I was a handsome demon. But I was addicted to a game: to go on scaring and

teasing the sages. That was the sole fun for me. Once I stole some food from the hut of a rishi, Sthulashira by name, not knowing how powerful he was. He cursed me. I grew ugly."

To make good the loss of his looks, he did severe penance and ■ ■ result became very powerful. Power brought him pride. He made an assault on the castle of Indra. Indra's thunder fell on his head, pressing it down right into his chest. The impact was so terrible that at the bottom his legs too telescoped into his trunk. He pleaded with Indra to let him have some means of eating. Indra made his





mouth sprout on his belly and made his hands very long. He became famous ■ Kavandha.

Rishi Sthulashira had said that he will be liberated of his curse the day Rama and Lakshmana will fall into his hands.

Kavandha asked Rama and Lakshmana what caused their travel in that region. They told the dying demon that they were looking for Sita. "Once my spirit is relieved of this body, I will have the knowledge to guide you in the right direction," he said before dying. Rama and Lakshmana made a funeral pyre for him. Out of the flames appeared his spirit. He now looked bright and noble.

"O Rama, now I know who you should befriend to succeed

in your mission. Look yonder at the grove teeming with a variety of sweet fruits. Eat and relax and then proceed towards the beautiful lake Pampa. To its west is situated Mount Rushyamuk. While lying asleep on it if ■ dreams of ■ certain quantity of wealth, one comes across that much wealth after waking up. There you will meet Sugriva, the chieftain of the race of Vanaras. He is honourable and faithful. Strike a friendship with him and help him in his distress. He will leave no stone unturned in his efforts to locate Sita," said the spirit of Kavandha.

Rama thanked him and wished him well.

—To Continue

Readers ■ welcome ■ send such queries ■ culture, literature or general knowledge which should be of interest to others too, for brief ■ from the Chandamama.



TRADE AND TEMPLE

In Vellupur village lived Gunanidhi. He was educated but unemployed and so quite poor. After completing his studies, he had tried hard to get a job but without success. One day he left for the town.

On the outskirts of the town lay a deserted temple. Gunanidhi camped on its verandah. When anxiety and utter dejection would take over him, he would seek solace under the peepal tree in front of the temple. When the sun would be too harsh or rainfall too heavy, he would take shelter inside the temple.

The temple was in a state of complete neglect since the death of the landlord who had built it and the death of the priest whom he had appointed. Cobwebs hung from every corner of the ceiling and dirt and dust

carpeted every inch of the floor. The temple became Gunanidhi's lodge and he gradually cleaned up the place.

Most of the people in Vellupur were illiterate. They would come to Gunanidhi to have their letters read or written. These people soon got into the habit of paying their respects to the deity of the temple and offering money. Gunanidhi would take this money and spend it for himself.

One day a rich merchant from a nearby town was passing through Vellupur. A heavy rain broke out. He took shelter in the temple. Folding his hands to the deity he declared, "O Goddess, I am on my way to clinch a business deal. If I make a good profit, I shall repair and white-wash your shrine."

The merchant made money



beyond his wildest dreams. True to his words, he restored the temple. The story of the merchant's wish coming true spread like wildfire. It came to be generally believed that the deity of the temple would fulfil the prayers of her devotees. Soon the number of people visiting the temple increased. Gunanidhi's income too increased. He brought his family there.

As Gunanidhi prospered, some villagers grew envious of him.

In a short while they found out that Gunanidhi was not at all a pious man. He did not get up early in the morning and

offer prayers to the deity, as a good keeper of the temple should. Neither did he conduct *poojas* nor did he observe fasts on the holy days. The envious ones instigated the village folk who were not aghast. They strode straight to the administrator of that region. One of the men spoke up for the group. "Sir, Gunanidhi should not be allowed to live in the temple. He is hardly a ■■■ worthy of living there. He is not at all pious and from a certain point of view he has betrayed the trust reposed in him. He should be severely punished for his misdeeds."

This was a delicate issue. The administrator did not want to make a hasty decision. He announced that he would think about the problem and then give a fitting answer.

The very next day the King, ■ one of his trips arrived at Vellupur. The administrator immediately forwarded his problem to the king.

The King summoned Gunanidhi and said, "You are accused of being ■ atheist. How can you live in the temple as its keeper? You have insulted the deity. What do you have to say

to this?"

"Forgive me, O King," replied Gunanidhi, "I have never told anyone that I am the keeper of the temple. I am unemployed and poor with hardly anything to eat. I came to this temple for shelter. I cleaned up the place for my own comfort. Soon, devotees started trickling in and I used the money left by them for my daily needs. If not getting up early and not offering prayers indicate that I am an atheist, then indeed, My Lord, I am."

"You live as the keeper of the temple and at the same time agree that you are an atheist!

Then tell yourself—in what manner you are to be punished," said the King.

"O King, punish me in whatever manner you find fit to punish Ramdhan," replied Gunanidhi. "Ramdhan is a very prosperous cheroot manufacturer. Thousands of cheroots are manufactured everyday by his employees and he markets them all around this area."

"But manufacturing and marketing cheroots are no crime!" exclaimed the King.

"Sir, though Ramdhan's business depends on cheroots, he himself does not smoke. Not only that, but if someone asks



him for a cheroot, he informs him that cheroot-smoking is injurious to health," said Gunanidhi.

Now the King was getting impatient with what at first appeared irrelevant, but suddenly he laughed out aloud. "Now I understand what you are driving at," he said. "Though Ramdhan is a cheroot merchant, he tells people that cheroot is not good for one's health. His honesty should be appreciated. So are you honest. You could have pretended to be a religious man but you did not. You preferred to speak the truth boldly. So far all is well. But religious rite is not trade. People came to the temple because of their faith in the deity. You have acted as a priest. A priest stands as a link between the deity and the devotees. He

must have absolute faith in the deity. Is it not She who is supporting you?"

"That, indeed is true, My Lord," replied Gunanidhi.

"Well then, I order that you shall no longer be the keeper of the temple," announced the King.

"My Lord, I shall have to look for another dilapidated and deserted temple!" said Gunanidhi thoughtfully.

The King laughed. "No, Gunanidhi don't worry about your livelihood. I am pleased with your honesty. Come to my capital and I shall certainly give you a job."

"Gunanidhi's joy knew no bounds. He saluted the King and turning around, saluted the deity, in his heart, this time with real devotion.





THE TWO COMPANIONS

In a certain small town lived a man named Abu Keer. In those days the art of dyeing clothes in different colours was very much appreciated. Abu Keer was a skilled dyer. He earned well by doing his work. But he was lazy and greedy. He did not keep his word. On the other hand, he sometimes sold away the costly garments people left on his charge and told the customers that the garments had been stolen.

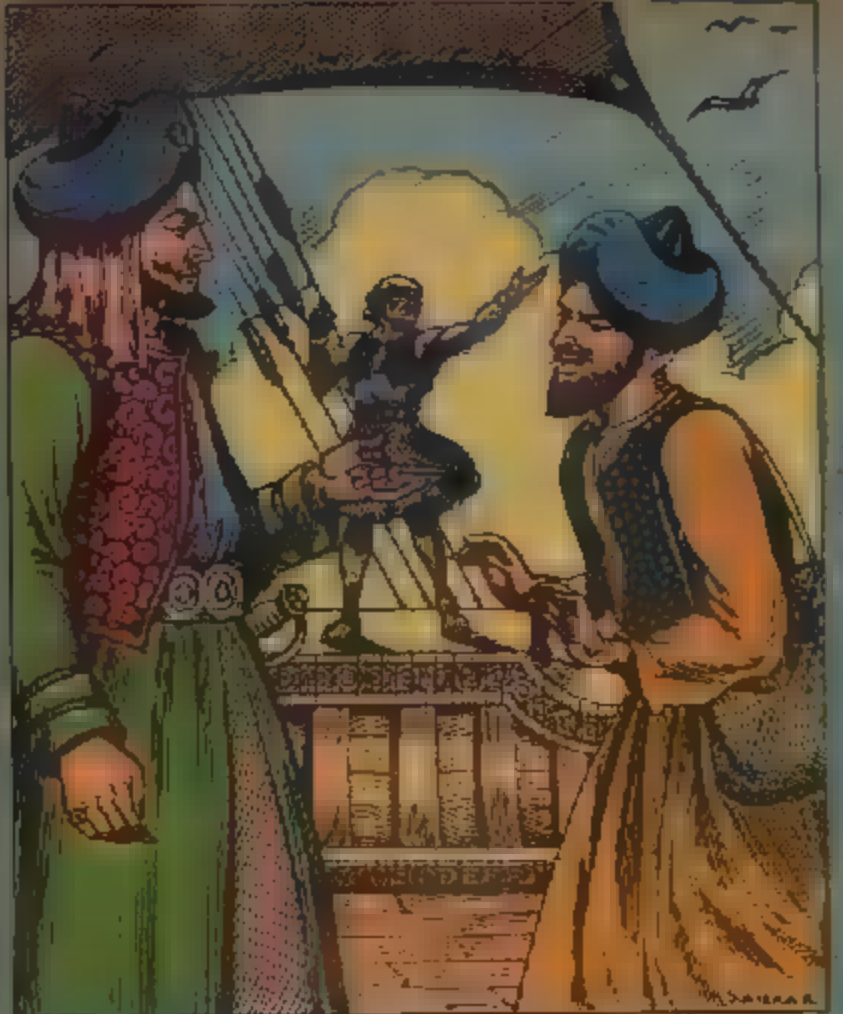
As time passed, the townsfolk realised what kind of a man Abu Keer was. Only those who came to the city newly still gave him their clothes. He cheated them too. Then it so happened that his old customers came in groups and took him to task. Abu Keer did not open his shop. He sat in a barber's shop opposite to his own shop and

watched the visitors. He went and opened his shop only if the customers were new. But then he sold their clothes too and never met them again.

But how long could this go on? The people complained to the chieftain of the town. One day Abu Keer saw some officers coming and sealing his shop. His property had been taken over by the Government. It was to be sold in auction. Whatever money it fetched would be distributed among those who had lost their clothes.

Now, the shop in which Abu Keer sat belonged to Abu Seer. He was moved to tears when he saw Abu Keer losing his property. He asked him, "My friend, what would you do now?"

"What can I do?" asked Abu Keer in return, his heart heavy with sorrow.



"Look here," said Abu Seer, "I am not doing well in my business either. There are so many barbers in this small town of ours. That is why I am thinking of shifting to a city. If you so desire, you can accompany me. We will seek our future in a new place."

Abu Keer gladly agreed to the proposal. They both swore that if one of them failed to earn, the other one would support him.

They acted quickly. A ship was leaving for the great city of Cairo the very next day. They boarded it. Soon the little food

they carried was finished. But Abu Seer soon found out that several of the passengers needed shave and hair-cut. He became active. In turn they paid him with shares of their food.

Abu Seer was the only barber in the ship. The captain too needed a hair-cut. He sent for Abu Seer. While talking to him, the captain found him to be a nice man. They became friends. Abu Seer told the captain all about himself and his friend. Said the captain, "You and your friend can dine with me every day. That will save you the botheration of looking for food."

The barber was happy. He returned to his friend and told him of the captain's kindness. But his friend said, "Why don't you bring me my share of food?"

That was an awkward situation. But the barber did not mind that. He told the captain that his friend was sick. He carried food for him.

During the days of voyage all that Abu Keer did was eat the food his friend earned and sleep. His laziness was unbelievable.

At last the ship reached Cairo

on the river Nile. The captain took the two friends to an inn and introduced them to the inn-keeper. They got a room cheap.

Abu Keer never moved out of bed under the pretext that he was sick. Abu Seer went out every day once in the morning and again in the afternoon, to work with his scissors and thread. He bought utensils and food-stuff with the money he earned. He cooked himself and shared the food with Abu Keer.

Forty days passed. One day the barber was ill. He gave some money to the inn-keeper to buy food for him and his friend. This

went on for three days. On the fourth day the barber became unconscious. Abu Keer got up and searched the pockets of his friend. He then left with whatever his friend had, without speaking a word to anybody. Only the inn-keeper saw him going out.

It was for the first time that Abu Keer was out in the city. He was amazed at the prosperity of Cairo. While strolling leisurely, he observed a queer thing: that the well-dressed people wore clothes of only one colour—blue. Soon he found a dyeing shop. He enquired how





much he has to pay to dye his jacket and learnt that the fee charged was quite high.

"In what colour would you dye my jacket?" he asked.

The dyer looked at him with surprise. "What do you mean by that question? As if one could dye in red! Don't you know that blue is the colour for dyeing?" he said.

Abu Keer understood that the dyers in that city knew only one colour and that was blue. Straight he went to the Sultan and said, "My Lord, I was the master dyer in my city. Out to find out the techniques of

dyeing used in other cities, I find that I know more techniques than the dyers of your great city know. If you give me a building and some money, I can dye your valuable clothes in many colours!"

The Sultan got interested in the project. He allowed him to occupy a vacant building and provided him with the services of as many slaves as he needed. He also gave him a thousand gold mohurs to begin his trade.

Abu Keer got busy. The Sultan sent him a few sets of his clothes to begin with. Abu Keer dyed them in various gaudy colours and displayed them in front of his shop. Crowds gathered and gaped at the marvellous art of Abu Keer.

The Sultan was much pleased. He sent him many gifts. In no time Abu Keer became the favourite with the nobility of the city. They sent him more and more clothes. Abu Keer appointed more and more slaves. He grew wealthy very fast. What is more, because of the Sultan's favour, he became powerful in the city. Inside the inn Abu Seer the barber lay unconscious for three days. The inn-keeper was kind to him. He

even fetched some medicines for him.

After a fortnight Abu Seer recovered enough strength to sit up. He was surprised that Abu Keer was not to be seen. The inn-keeper had supplied him food and medicines all these days, free. He now thought of paying him at least partly.

"My brother, will you please see how much money is there in my pockets?" he asked the inn-keeper.

The inn-keeper made his pockets inside out, but did not find a single coin. Then he said, "Now I know why your friend slipped away when you were unconscious. He must be an unkind man."

Abu Seer did not know what to say. He felt very sad. The inn-keeper told him, "Don't worry. I will help you as long as necessary. First become strong enough to do your work."

Abu Seer thanked him and promised to repay his debt. Few more days passed. Abu Seer went out to the streets to find a suitable spot where he could sit down and offer his services to passers-by. As he walked along, he saw an elegant building which lay vacant earlier. It also



bore a signboard saying that it was the city's greatest dyeing shop.

Colourful clothes had been hung and spread on the roof of the building and in front of it. Abu Seer saw a number of slaves, busy receiving and delivering clothes. He asked them who was the owner of the shop. When he learnt that it was Abu Keer, he was very happy. "My friend has not found time to call on me because he is keeping extremely busy," he told himself.

He stepped into the building and saw Abu Keer surrounded



not only by customers but also by some of the respectable citizens of Cairo. Abu Seer was happy to see his friend grown so important.

But Abu Keer, far from showing any sign of joy at the sudden appearance of his friend, shouted angrily, "You wretch! Won't you leave me in peace? Did I not tell you a hundred times that I won't dole out money to you any more?"

"But, you see, I'm..."

"Get out," shouted Abu Keer, giving no chance to Abu Seer to complete his explanation. Instantly some of Abu

Keer's slaves caught hold of him and beat him up. "Never dare to show your face here again," Abu Keer warned him.

Abu Seer did not know what to make of this except that God was putting him to a test.

He went to a lonely place and shed bitter tears. After a while he had a desire to have a good bath. He wandered all over the city, but saw not even one hammam or bathing place.

"Good friend, can you show me the way to a hammam?" Abu Seer asked a passer-by.

"Hammam?" asked the man with surprise, "What is that?"

"It is a public bathing house where people can have an oil-rub, a massage and a fresh bath in warm or cool water," said the barber.

"Well, here in our country one can only have a dip in the river. The Sultan and other wealthy people take bath in their courtyards, by their servants pouring water on them.

Abu Seer understood that the people of Cairo did not know the luxury of a hammam. He went to the Sultan and described to him the joys of a bath in a hammam. The Sultan got curious. "Build one for us. We

will pay all the money you need for it," he said.

Abu Seer's joy knew no bounds. He commanded ■ hundred workers and had the hammam built quickly. Apart from pools of fresh water with inlet, outlet and heating arrangements, he constructed a charming fountain at the centre of the hammam. The Sultan set apart for him some slaves whom he taught how to massage and attend upon the bathers.

On the opening day the Sultan and some of his top ministers and courtiers ■■■■ to take bath. Abu Seer had the pools

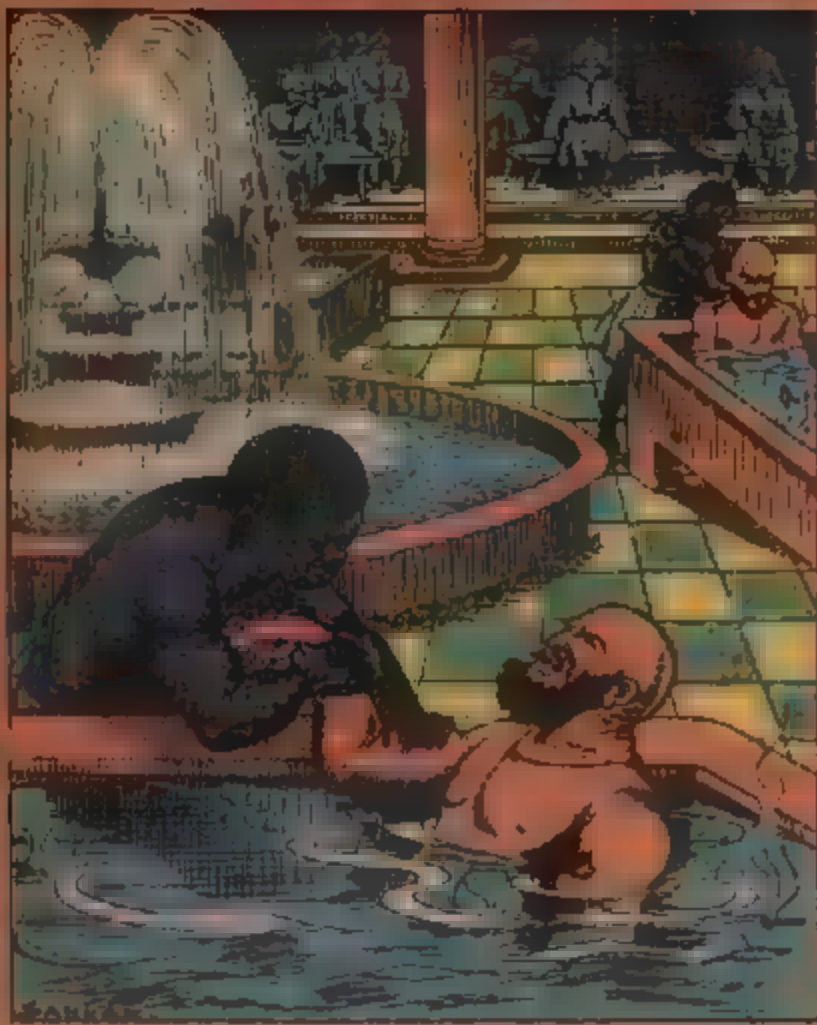
scented with rose water. The Sultan and his companions never knew that bathing could be such a memorable experience.

The Sultan paid Abu Seer a thousand gold coins and the rest of the bathers a hundred each. On the very first day Abu Seer made ■ small fortune.

From the next day the hammam was open to the public. Abu Seer gladly accepted whatever the bathers paid.

One day the captain of the ship which had brought Abu Seer to Cairo visited the bath. Abu Seer received him with great warmth. He did not accept





any fee from the captain.

Soon Abu Keer heard about the new attraction of the city. He guessed that the stranger who opened it must be Abu Seer. He came there with his slaves. Abu Seer ran to welcome him the moment his eyes fell on him.

"Brother," said Abu Keer feigning complaint in his tone, "were we not under oath that ■ will remain faithful friends to each other? How is it that you did not even pay me ■ visit?"

"My brother," said Abu Seer. "I did pay a visit to you. But I was received with sticks and

thrown out with abuses!"

"Good God, ■ it you that I chastised? Fie upon me! I meant to drive away a loafer who used to harass me. No doubt he resembled you. But what a blunder I committed! I feel like dying with shame!" said Abu Keer.

"Never mind the blunder, friend. Who is above errors?" said Abu Seer. He then took the dyer around his hammam and made him take ■ luxurious bath.

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Abu Keer. "You have made ■ perfect hammam but for one thing."

"What's that?"

"You should provide the bathers with the depilatory paste made up of white arsenic and lime!" said Abu Keer.

"That's right. I had forgotten about that," said Abu Seer. "I'll introduce it from tomorrow."

Abu Keer took leave of Abu Seer and straight went to the Sultan. He prayed for ■ private audience with the Sultan. When that was granted, he told him, "My Lord, your life is in danger. Last year ■ barber named Abu Seer and myself were taken prisoner by the Sultan of the neighbouring state who is your enemy. I ■ set free by paying

ransom. But Abu Seer was set free on condition that he will poison you. In fact, his wife and children are still kept as hostages by that Sultan. I had almost forgotten it. But when today I found that the same Abu Seer had opened a hammam here, I understood that he plans to kill you."

"But how can he do that?" asked the surprised Sultan.

"He will offer you ■ paste to be rubbed on your body. That is poisonous and that shall kill you."

"But we went to his bath. He did not offer us any paste!"

"My Lord, that is why you are alive! Now that he has inspired trust in you, he will offer the paste when you pay ■ visit again!" said Abu Keer.

The king was angry and sad. He could not be in peace until he verified the truth of Abu Keer's statement.

Next day Abu Seer was informed that the Sultan ■■■ visiting his hammam. He got ready to receive him. The Sultan arrived before noon. After giving him an oil-rub, Abu Seer offered him ■ paste.

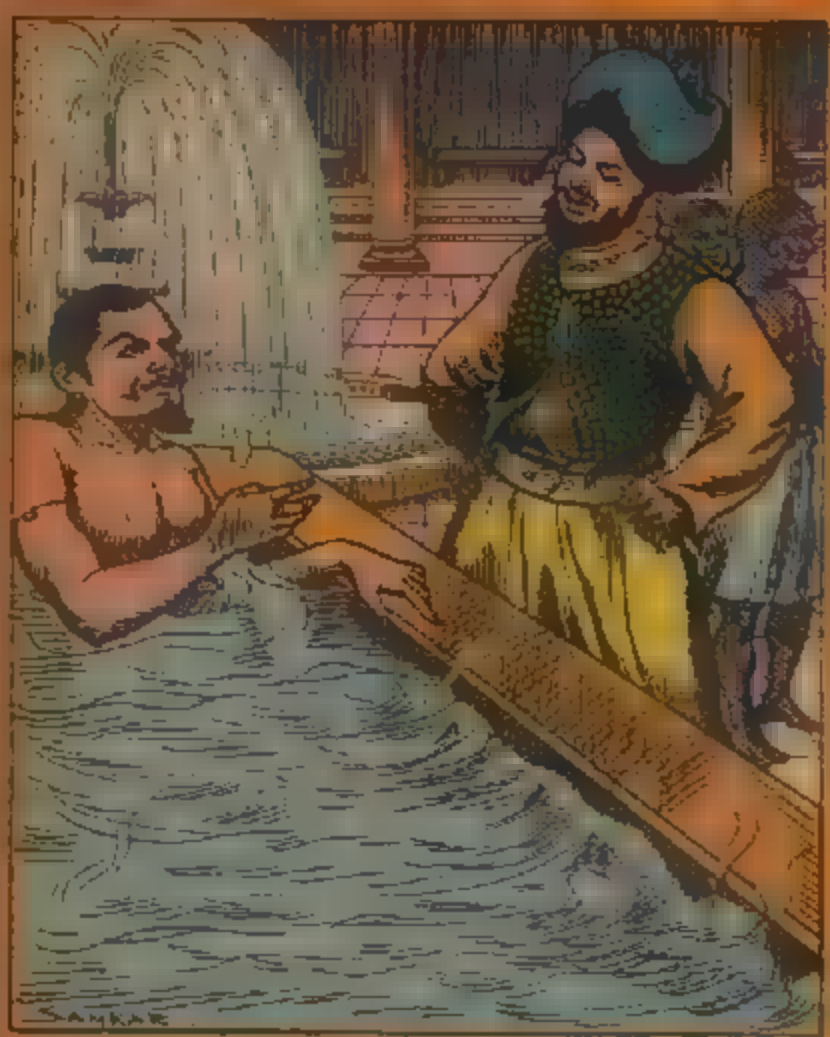
The Sultan smelt it. ■■ contained arsenic. He grew furious.



"Take hold of this fellow!" he roared out. Immediately the royal bodyguards bound Abu Seer's hands with strong ropes.

The Sultan then hurriedly finished his bath and proceeded to his court. His bodyguards followed him dragging Abu Seer along with them.

The Sultan was much agitated because that day he had lost his diamond signet ring. An emissary of the Caliph was to meet him the next day. The signet ring was necessary to be embossed below the Sultan's signature in ■ letter he had written to the Caliph. In that bad mood he saw



the captain of the ship who was so friendly with Abu Seer.

"Captain," said the Sultan. "Do immediately as I say. Put this traitor in a bag and seal it. Then carry it into the river as I look on from my fortress window. On a signal from me, throw the bag into the water."

The captain was surprised. But that was not the time for him to speak in favour of Abu Seer. He took hold of the prisoner and went away.

"My friend, I'm sure that the Sultan is under a wrong impression about you. He is in a bad mood because of the loss of

his signet ring. We must wait," the captain told Abu Seer on their way to the ship.

"But aren't you going to throw me into the river?" asked Abu Seer.

"I'm going to do that. But without sealing the bag and in such a way that you can slip out of the bag. Besides, I will ply the boat to a spot where the water is not deep. Once the Sultan withdraws from the window, you can walk to the other shore," said the captain.

Things were done according to plan. The Sultan saw the sack being dropped into the water. He waved to the captain conveying his happiness and withdrew from the window.

Abu Seer's feet could touch the bottom of the river. He walked to the other shore, carrying the empty bag with him. To his amusement he found that a big fish had entered the bag.

It was evening and he was hungry. He had a knife tucked in his waist-belt. He cut the fish and struck two stones and lighted a fire with dry leaves. As he prepared to roast the fish, what should roll out of it but the king's signet ring.

Abu Seer forgot his hunger

and swum across the river and appeared before the king. The king was at first horrified to see him all wet and alive!

"God knows how a fish swallowed the signet ring. He kept me alive to find it and restore it to you. Now, My Lord, before you arrange to kill me finally, kindly tell ■■■ what my fault was, why you decided to punish me with death. All I wish to do is, pray to God to pardon me for my fault before I die!" said Abu Seer.

The king was deeply moved. He asked, "But ■■■ you not attempt to kill me?"

"Kill you, My Lord? Why should I?"

"Were you not employed by an enemy Sultan to do that? Had you not put arsenic in the paste you gave ■■■ before bath?"

Abu Seer stood speechless for a moment. "My Lord, the small quantity white arsenic that was mixed with the paste is harmless. It is always used in such paste. You ■■■ try it on me as many times as you like. I have never known any other Sultan. Someone has poisoned your ■■■ against me."

"Who else but Abu Keer, the





dyer!" said the Sultan.

Abu Seer looked astounded. Then he recovered his speech and said, "My Lord, I've done my best to help Abu Keer. I did him no harm. Yet he stole my money while I lay in a swoon. He had me beaten up for no reason when I went to see him. As if that was not enough, he planned to put me to death! He visited the hammam like a friend, appreciated everything and reminded me of the paste which I should offer the bathers. And then he complained to you that I was going to kill you with that paste! How to explain his

conduct? All I can say is, he is a false friend, ■ ■ ■ who loves mischief."

"Tell me in detail all the mischiefs he did to you," instructed the Sultan. Abu Seer narrated the history of their companionship.

When Abu Seer completed his narration the Sultan asked his sepoy to bring Abu Keer with bound hands and feet forthwith. He also called the inn-keeper and the captain.

Looking ■ Abu Keer, the inn-keeper said, "My Lord, this fellow lay in my inn like a log. Abu Seer fed him. When Abu Seer fell ill, the fellow stole his money and deserted him."

Said the captain, "In the ship too Abu Seer laboured and earned food for himself and his lazy friend."

The Sultan's surprise was even greater now. "Why did you humiliate your friend by beating him up and why did you wish to get him killed?" he asked Abu Keer.

Abu Keer had no answer.

The Sultan gazed at him for sometime and said, "Such ■ wicked fellow deserves the most severe punishment. Tie this man in a sack of limestone and throw



him into the river.

Abu Seer begged the Sultan to pardon his old friend, but the Sultan did not yield to his request. The Sultan's order was carried out.

Later the Sultan sent for Abu Seer and asked him, "What can I do for you?"

"My Lord, I have trained my assistants in the rules of running ■ hammam. Now I wish to return to my native town. Kindly allow ■ to do so," said Abu Seer.

The Sultan consented to his

proposal. He heaped upon him numerous precious gifts and asked the captain to escort him to his home-town.

While sailing, one day the captain found a sack stuck to an oar. they recognised the sack. Inside it, what remained of Abu Keer ■ his skeleton. Abu Seer carried it to his town and gave it ■ decent burial and raised ■ tomb over it.

Abu Seer, with his well-earned wealth and kind nature, became a very important man in his town.

An elephant caught in ■ muddy pool is far less powerful than ■ jackal who is free.

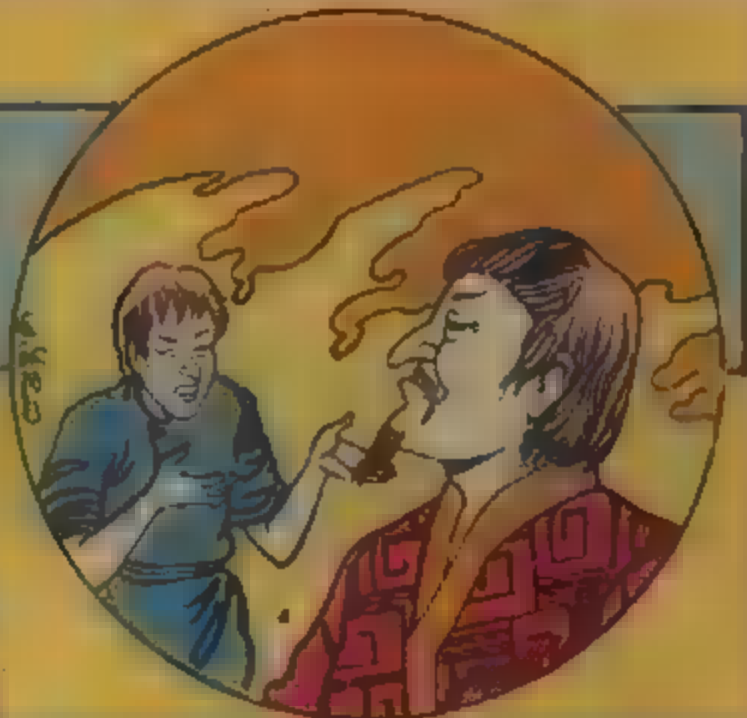
—The Kural

Deep in the ■ are riches beyond compare. But if you seek safety, ■ is on the shore.

—A Sufi saying

HALF AND HALF

A landlord was notorious for exploiting poor people. One day a young peasant from a distant village met him. "Can I raise a crop on a piece of your land?" he proposed.



"You can," said the landlord. "When the crop is ready, I will take half." At harvest time the landlord saw that the peasant had taken away the upper part of the nice crop, cutting the plants by halves!

The landlord dragged the young man to the Kazi. When the young man pleaded that that is what he had understood by the contract, the Kazi said, "All right. Next time you let the landlord take the upper half of the crop."



In due time the young man informed the landlord that he had cut away the lower half of the crop, leaving the upper half for the landlord. The happy landlord went and saw that this time the crop was potato!

■ MATTER OF DESTINY

"Let us go to Gurunath, the astrologer who is camping in our town to find out when our daughter is likely to get married," said Sushila to her husband, Kumaresh.

"Why are you so anxious about our daughter's marriage?" protested Kumaresh.

This dialogue ■■■ repeated from time to time. Sushila would always say in conclusion, "It is foolish not to take advantage of the skill of a man who is at hand."

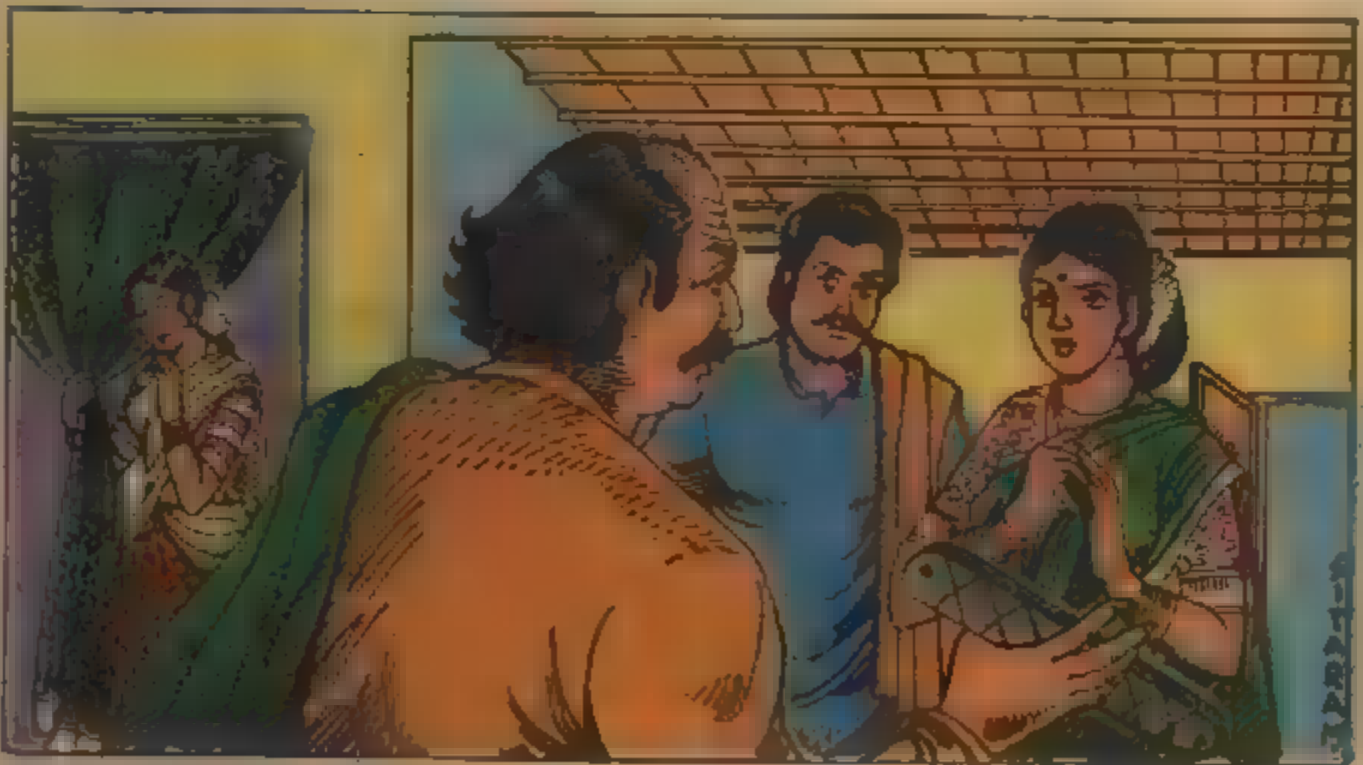
At last Kumaresh took his wife to Gurunath's lodge. On their knocking at the door, a young lady opened the door. She introduced herself as Gurunath's daughter.

When Gurunath appeared, Kumaresh asked him, "We met your sweet daughter. Have you decided upon her marriage?"

"How ■■■ I? Is that not ■ matter of destiny?" answered Gurunath.

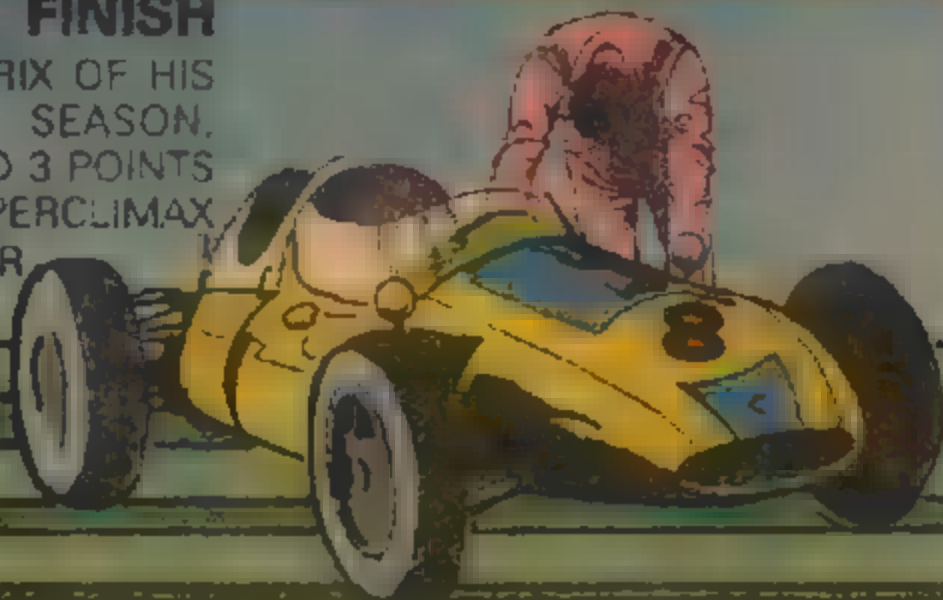
"Thank you. We will come another time," said Kumaresh ■ he turned to go. Sushila followed him without a murmur.

"Now you understand!" commented Kumaresh on the way.



PUSHED TO FINISH

IN THE LAST GRAND PRIX OF HIS FIRST CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON, JACK BRABHAM GAINED 3 POINTS BY PUSHING HIS COOPERCLIMAX ACROSS THE LINE AFTER IT HAD RUN OUT OF FUEL.



NUMBERED SHIRTS

WERE FIRST WORN BY RUGBY PLAYERS IN A GAME BETWEEN NEW ZEALAND AND QUEENSLAND IN 1897.



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PENGUIN

THE KING PENGUIN INCUBATES ITS SINGLE EGG ON ITS FEET, UNDER AN INSULATING FLAP OF SKIN. IT IS HATCHED IN A TEMPERATURE OF -40°C BUT IT MANAGES TO KEEP IT AT $+40^{\circ}\text{C}$ —A TEMPERATURE DIFFERENCE OF 80°C .



FIERY FALLACY

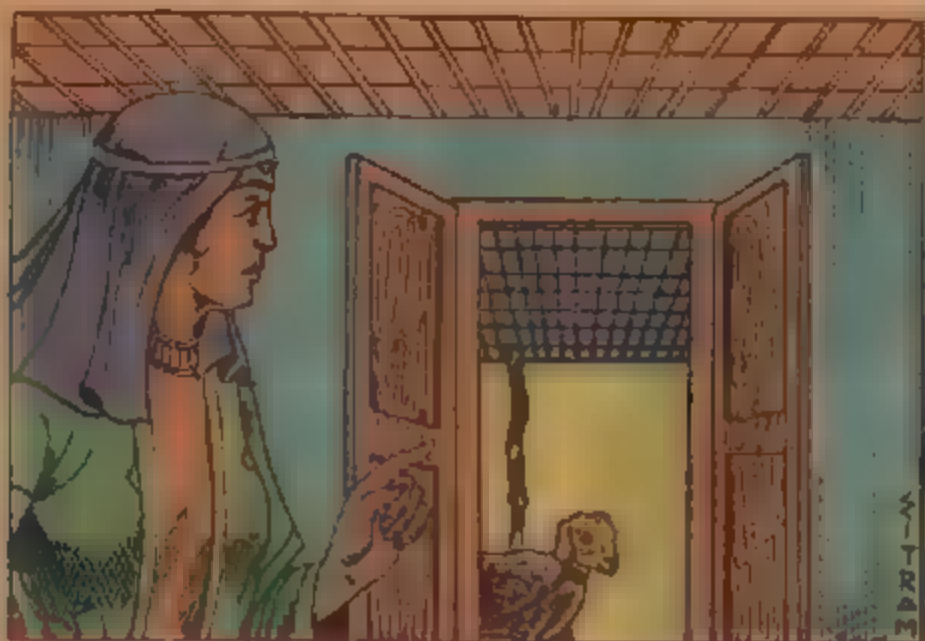
CONTRARY TO POPULAR BELIEF, THE SCORPION DOES NOT COMMIT SUICIDE BY STINGING ITSELF TO DEATH WHEN SURROUNDED BY FIRE. LIKE OTHER VENOMOUS CREATURES IT IS IMMUNE TO ITS OWN POISON.



Brown Bear's Diet

PLANT FOOD SUPPLIES UP TO 70% OF THE BROWN BEAR'S DIET. THE REST IS MADE UP OF BEETLES, MICE, VOLES, SQUIRRELS AND SMALL DEER.





RAISING A GOAT

Once upon a time in Tashkent lived a merchant called Meerkamal. His wife's name was Zameera. They had no children. It was a habit with Meerkamal to be out on business six days a week. Only on Wednesdays could he be found at home. His wife Zameera would also find some work or the other in town and she managed to live on whatever she would get in return. Meerkamal and Zameera were very stingy with their money. They spent as little as possible.

Once, Meerkamal brought with him a frail looking kid-goat. It was on the verge of dying. Meerkamal had bought it for almost nothing.

The next day Meerkamal left as usual for his tours. Zameera could not go out for work. She was stuck with the kid. It would bleat and bleat all day long,

up all the greenery and dirty the whole house. It was a nuisance. Zameera was absolutely sick of it. When her husband returned six days later, she told him with tears of frustration, "Take this kid away from here immediately, or I shall go away to my parents." Meerkamal calmed her down saying, "Don't be hasty dear, don't be hasty. I will certainly find a way out of this difficulty. Only keep calm and have patience."

That day, Meerkamal visited the cemetery to pay his respects to his departed mother. It struck him that there was an abundance of green grass there.

"This would be the ideal place for the goat," he thought. Finishing his prayers, he quickly rushed home and returned with the animal.

He went to the caretaker of the cemetery and said, "Zafar,

I'm sick and may die any time. As I don't have any children I request you to look after my funeral rites."

"What business have I to do that?"

"In return, I am willing to give you this goat." The caretaker looked at the price offered and was happy. It was settled that he would perform the last rites of Meerkamal without fail. He took an oath to this effect.

Three months later, Meerkamal visited the cemetery once again. He saw that his frail kid had grown fat and healthy. He was very happy.

He went to the caretaker and decried, "O Zafar, I am lost, I am finished! Last week I sold some medicine to a physician. Two of his patients died because of the medicine. The Sultan has passed orders that I be exiled

from Tashkent. Now my friend, get ready that we can both depart as quickly as possible."

"What do you mean by both of us?" demanded Zafar, "I haven't been exiled!"

"That's true. You have not been exiled," said Meerkamal. "But don't you remember our deal? You are supposed to perform my funeral rites in lieu of my goat. So you should be with me whenever and wherever I die. That's why I gave you my precious goat! Come, let's go!"

Trembling with fury at Meerkamal's audacity, Zafar shouted, "Take your worthless goat with you and die when and where you please. Don't bother me." And he shut the door on Meerkamal's face.

Chuckling to himself, Meerkamal proceeded to the market to sell his goat—the best goat of the season!



SATYA TAPAS

Devdutta, a childless Brahmin of Koshala performed a Yajna with the intention of being blessed by a son. His priest, Sage Godila was reciting hymns from the Vedas, but he made an incorrect statement. Devdutta corrected him. That angered the priest. He said that although Devdutta will have a son, the boy will be arrogant and unwilling to learn.

Devdutta apologised to the priest. Sage Godila then said that even though the boy will be a scholar, he will be a rishi.

In due course a son was born to Devdutta. As prophesied, the boy whose name was Utathya, became arrogant and obstinate. He was left in the Ashram of a guru, but he was neither able to learn a single hymn nor able to practise any rite. The guru was disgusted. Students made fun of him. In humiliation Utathya left the Ashram and lived in a hut on the bank of the Ganga.

Although he knew a hymn, he bathed in the Ganga prayerfully and never uttered a lie. His total allegiance to truth earned him the name Satya Tapas—or the sage who practised truth.

One day a hunter was chasing a boar. The boar took refuge in the hut of Satya Tapas. Soon the hunter was there and he asked the sage whether he had seen his boar or not.

Satya Tapas would not utter a lie. At the same time he would not like the boar to be killed. Out of his anguish flowed a few poetic lines from his lips. The hunter's mind was changed. He gave up hunting.

Thereafter, with the blessings of the Divine, Satya Tapas emerged as a poet.





New Tales of King Vikram and the Vampire

STRANGE LUCK OF THE MISER

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. ■ rained from time to time. At the intervals of thunderclaps could be heard the moaning of jackals and the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down and began crossing the desolate cremation ground. Suddenly spoke the Vampire that possessed the corpse. "O King, I have heard that you do ■ lot of disinterested work. Tell me, is one to certain to reap the fruits of one's good deeds? What about the man who doesn't willingly perform ■ good deed but practises charity out of compulsion? Does he not gain something by it? Let ■■ cite ■ case. Pay attention to my narration. That might bring you some



relief."

The Vampire went on: Long ago in Vichitrapur lived a merchant named Ramratan. Once he fell ill. All treatment proved ineffective. Ramratan's wife and children were greatly worried. Thy suggested that Ramratan should go to the capital and get himself treated there. But being a stubborn man Ramratan turned a deaf ear to the suggestion. All the neighbouring physicians were consulted and in spite of every effort and medicine Ramratan's health did not improve.

Once a holy man came to Vichitrapur. At the request of

Ramratan's wife, the holy man came to their house and after a long observation said to Ramratan, "Your illness cannot be cured by medicine. You have done many dishonest and unjust things in your business; you have cheated many people. This illness is the result of your sins. Do some unselfish work. Give satisfaction to others. The illness will disappear by itself."

After the sage departed the family gathered near Ramratan. They had heard the sage's advice.

"Let us feed the poor. That will be the good deed," said wife Hema.

Ramratan brushed aside the proposal. "Simply feeding them won't do. We have to keep in mind their satisfaction. If we need to satisfy them it becomes a very costly affair. How many times do we ourselves get the opportunity of eating delicacies to our satisfaction?"

"Let's open a charitable dispensary," said his eldest son.

"Think before you speak," Ramratan chided the young man. "If patients could be cured by treatment, why should I be still suffering? No, a dispensary is no good."

The eldest daughter said, "Father, what about opening ■ school?"

"Education does not make one ■ true man," said Ramratan. "Character is the main thing. In school they teach you how to read and write but they do not build character."

The youngest daughter said, "Let's go on a pilgrimage. The Lord's darshan will wash away the sins."

Ramratan said, "God is everywhere and in every idol. Only he is known by different names. If you have devotion in your heart, you don't have to go on a pilgrimage. You can ■ go to our village temple everyday and pray for my recovery."

It was clear to all the family members that Ramratan didn't want to part with his money. So they didn't pursue the matter further. Instead they went to the temple everyday and prayed, but nothing ■ of it.

News about Ramratan's illness spread. It also reached Raghu Singh's ears who lived ■ the neighbouring town. Once he used to do business with Ramratan but Ramratan had cheated him to bankruptcy. Raghu



Singh had dreamt of revenge and now hearing about Ramratan's illness he knew that the time had come for him to settle accounts.

In normal times Ramratan used to be a light sleeper with very sharp ears. But the illness had dulled his senses and he sometimes lay in a stupor.

So Raghu Singh arrived from Pataliputra and for two consecutive nights broke easily into Ramratan's house. But he didn't find any valuable thing. For these two days he remained in hiding and went without food. Meanwhile the family, except for Ramratan, came to



know that ■■■■■ was prowling in their house at night.

Then Raghu Singh entered Ramratan's house in the guise of ■ holy man and said, "Sethji, you ■■ going through ■ bad time ■ present."

Ramratan's illness had taken its toll not only on his body but also of his confidence in himself. He asked, frightened, "What do you mean?"

Raghu Singh said, "You know that Goddess Lakshmi is restless by nature. She has resided in your house for ■ long time. She wants to go elsewhere now. Twice she has tried to get out of your house but has been

detained for some reason. Maybe tonight she will escape. You have, been ill because of her restlessness."

Ramratan was unaware of the fact that someone had been prowling in his house for two nights. But the others knew and they got panicky. In an entreating voice Ramratan asked, "Sadhuji, is there ■ way to stop the Goddess from going away? Can you cure ■■ by making her happy?"

"Yes. Tonight I will propitiate her through hymns and prayers. You will be rid of your illness," said Raghu Singh.

Ramratan requested Raghu Singh to perform the rite in the evening. In the meantime Ramratan's wife Hema served Raghu Singh with dishes of excellent food. The famished fake sadhu ate to his heart's content and rested for the whole of the afternoon. In the evening he made ready for the rite. While Raghu Singh went ■■ with the rituals in front of Lakshmi's idol, he noticed heavy tears roll down the cheeks of Hema, Ramratan's wife. Raghu Singh felt guilty about it, for in the past Hema ■■ always treated him affectionately. Raghu Singh

pushed away those guilty pangs from his heart and gave everyone ■ piece of sweet earlier offered to the deity. In the prasad he had mixed some sleeping powder. In a short while Ramratan, his wife and children—all fell into ■ drugged sleep.

Raghu Singh withdrew ■ key from under Ramratan's pillow and opened a chest. It was full of money and jewellery. A happy Raghu Singh emptied the whole chest. Then he went to untie the bunch of keys tied to the border of Hema's saree. The moment his eyes fell on Hema, he stopped. Hema's face reminded him of his own mother.

"Does one steal from one's ■ mother? What has become of me? I'm turning into ■ cheat and an ordinary thief!" Raghu Singh sank to the ground in silence. His long nourished dream of revenge had vanished. At dawn Hema regained consciousness. As ■ ■ she looked at him Raghu Singh narrated his whole story.

"Forgive me, mother, I'm going," he said and walked away.

After ■ short while Ramratan called Hema and said, "Strange,

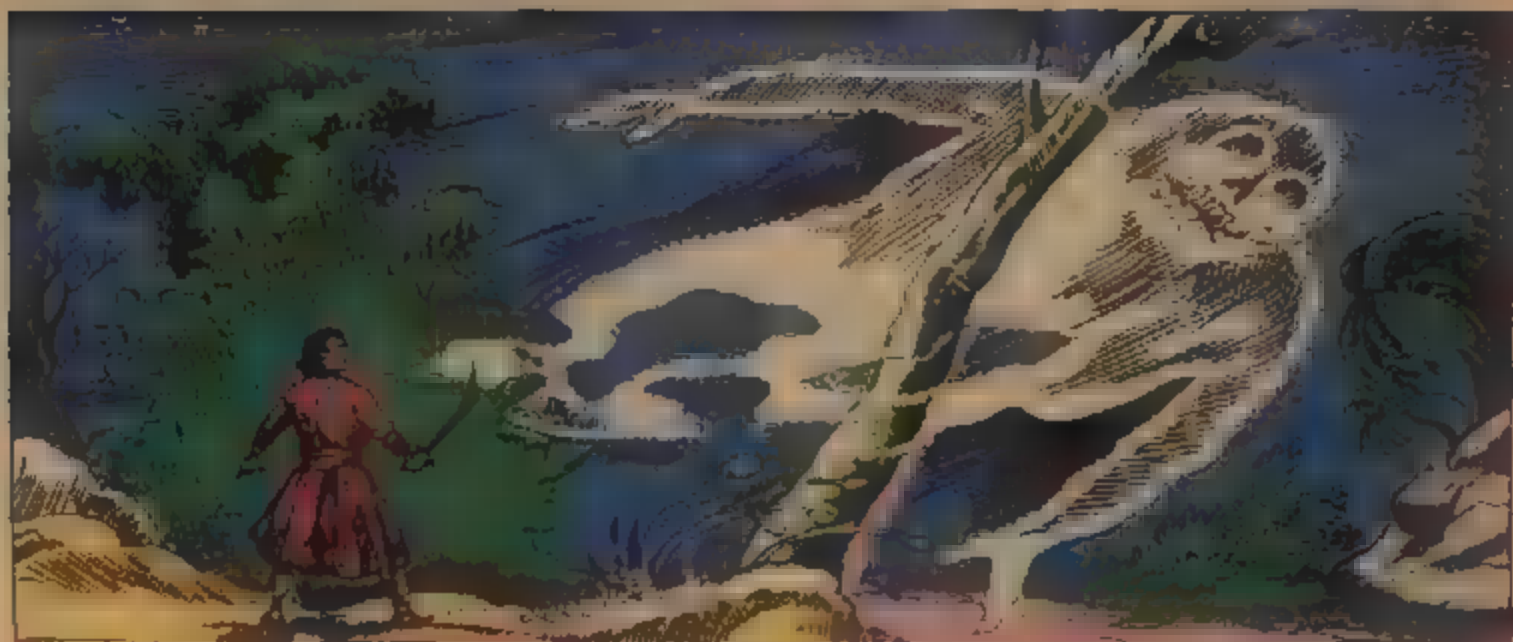


but I'm feeling fit ■ a fiddle. It ■ by the grace of Goddess Lakshmi."

"Yes," said Hema quietly.

Ramratan recovered fully. He distributed much wealth to make sure that the Goddess of wealth would not try to desert him ■ again.

The Vampire paused for ■ while and, in a challenging tone, demanded of King Vikram, "O King, how is it that while Ram- ■ did not heed the true sadhu's advice and continued to be sick, he stood by the fake sadhu's advice and got rid of his illness? Ramratan had ■ in ■ done selfless act and yet he seems to receive God's



Grace. How was that possible? O King, if you can, answer me. Should you keep ■■■■ despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your neck."

Forthwith replied King Vikram: In this world, many ■ times one's destiny is linked with another's. Ramratan never did ■ good deed but his wife Hema always wished the good of others. Raghu Singh who had

not eaten for two days got im-
■■■■ satisfaction by eating out of Hema's hands. Hema's devotion for Goddess Lakshmi was remarkable. It is possible that the force of her goodwill worked on Ramratan's life and changed his destiny to ■ certain extent."

No sooner had the King concluded his answer than the Vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.

An ■■■■ of keep-your-mouth-shut beats ■ ton of explanation.

Few people have good enough sight to see their own faults.

The most welcome person is the one who knows when to go



THE STRANGE RECEIPT BOOK

Shyam did not possess an estate! All he had was less than an acre of land. But he looked upon his land ■ a gold-mine. Well, it was neither a mine in that sense nor it yielded gold, but it yielded him golden fruit or any other crop.

Shyam was never tired of taking care of his land and his crop. He was amply rewarded for his labour. People flocked to buy his produce. He was not greedy. He sold things at reasonable price and even gave ■ few things free to the needy.

No wonder that the people of his village, Shravani, would love him.

But there ■■■ man who was awfully envious of him. He was his neighbour Vimal. "Brother Vimal, you have more lands than Shyam has. How is it

that you don't produce much?" villagers would often say by way of teasing Vimal."

"I don't care!" was Vimal's stock reply.

But was that true? No. He did not care to labour hard himself, but he cared very much for what Shyam did and he kept ■ careful watch on Shyam's land. From time to time he would steal a fruit or ■ plant from Shyam's land. Shyam never suspected that it was his neighbour who was doing such mischief.

One season Shyam grew pumpkins. What a magnificent crop was there! The fruit lying on his ground looked round and robust and as though they were sprayed with a mixture of gold and silver dust! Shyam named each one of them: Bhim, Arjun, Airavata, Goonda, Hoonda,

Sudarshan, so on and so forth. There were forty in all. He used to derive much happiness looking at them.

One evening he surveyed them closely and sighed. It was because they had grown ripe enough to be sold. Since there were so many, he decided to carry them to the weekly market, seven miles away the next day.

Shyam went out to the field early in the morning. He must begin plucking his precious pumpkins carefully before hiring a cart for carrying them to the market. But what did he see? Not a single pumpkin was

there. Bhim—Airavata—all had disappeared!

He sat down amidst the creepers. He checked his tears with great difficulty. Five minutes passed. He then decided that he must do something to trace the thief.

The thief was not likely to keep all the pumpkins for himself. Since the thief had stolen them the night before the market day, perhaps he had carried them to the market.

He broke all the forty stalks from which the pumpkins were hanging. He put them in a cloth and hurried away to the market.

He passed through the rows



of vegetable-stalls. He stopped before ■ stall. "Here, Here are they!" he shouted, "My Bhim, my Arjun, my Goonda, my..."

A small crowd gathered. "What are you saying like mad?" they asked.

"Mad? How can you call me mad? Isn't the burglar of my pumpkins mad? How could he believe that I shall fail to identify my produce?" shouted back Shyam.

It so happened that the superintendent of the market was there. He asked the shopkeeper, "Where did you collect these pumpkins?"

"A farmer from the village Shravani, Vimal by name, sold these to me," replied the shopkeeper.

Somebody informed the superintendent that Vimal was sipping tea inside a canteen. The superintendent had him called there.

"Brother Vimal! How could you steal my pumpkins?" asked Shyam, really surprised.

"How dare you call me ■ thief? These are all grown by me, in my own field!" replied Vimal.

Said the superintendent, "In that case I should visit Shravani and make an inquiry. But I have





■ time to do that.”

That encouraged Vimal. He said, “Huzoor, you should punish this fellow for blaming me,” said Vimal forcefully.

Just then Shyam quietly picked up ■ small bale he had deposited with a friendly shopkeeper. “Huzoor,” he told the superintendent, “I’ve the proof with me—in my receipt book.”

“What nonsense do you speak! Did the thief issue you a receipt for the things he stole?” asked the superintendent.

Shyam did not answer the question, but quietly opened his bale. There were forty stalks in it. One by one he put them to

his pumpkins. For each fruit, he had a stalk to fit exactly!

All looked amused. Vimal looked pale as ■ ghost. Meanwhile some villagers from Shravan had arrived there. Naturally they spoke in Shyam’s favour. Vimal stood speechless, his head hung in shame.

The superintendent obliged Vimal to give the money he had received from the shopkeeper to Shyam along with ■ heavy penalty. He also passed an order that in future nobody in the market ■ to buy anything from Vimal.

Shyam’s presence of mind ■ praised by ■ and all.

**MAKE SURE ■ YOUR COPY OF ENGLISH CHANDAMAMA
BY PLACING A REGULAR ORDER
WITH YOUR NEWS AGENT**

THE UNTOUCHABLE

On the banks of the sacred river Kaveri lived an ascetic. He lived in a small hut. The people of the nearby village were happy and proud that a holy man lived so close to them. They provided him with food and looked after him if he had any other need.

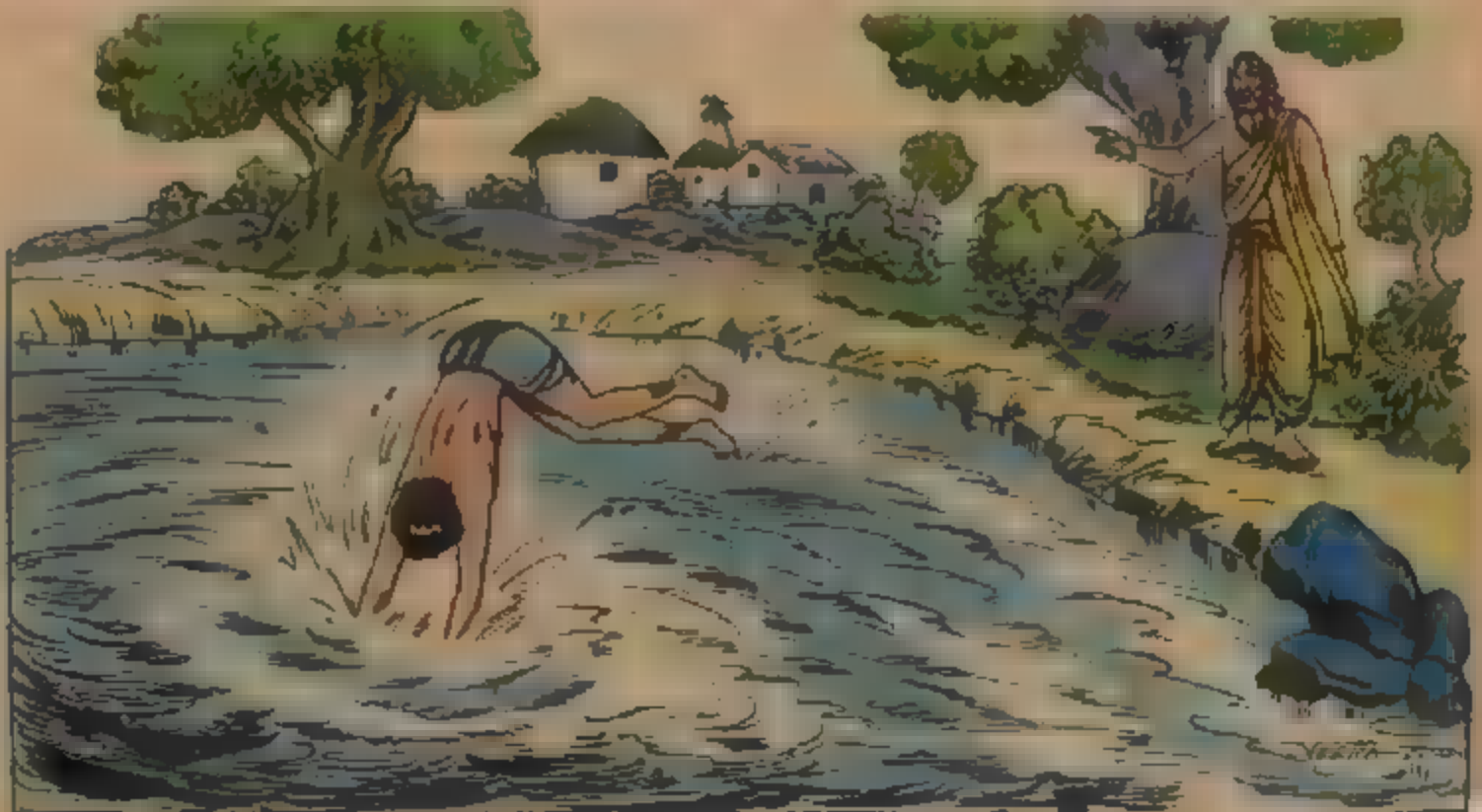
The holy man knew how much he was respected. He knew that the people will do whatever he wanted them to do. After his bath early in the morning, he sat for prayer on a slab of stone on the river. He asked the villagers not to disturb him

at that time.

The villagers remembered his instruction. If anyone had to bathe quite early in the morning, he took a dip silently far from the spot where the holy man sat. Nobody came near him.

One morning the holy man was surprised to see someone jumping into the river. A few drops of water fell on the holy man. He stood up. Shivering with anger, he shouted at the bather, "How dare you insult me?"

But the man who was swim-



ming merrily with fierce strokes paid no attention to the holy man's tirade. In fact he could not hear him because of the splashing sound he made.

As soon as the man emerged from the water, the holy man planted a slap on his cheek, shouting, "You Satan!" He would have belaboured him more, but a young man came running there and prostrated himself to the holy man from distance.

"Sir," he said penitently, "This boy is my wife's younger brother. He hails from another village. He knew nothing of your morning penance. When I found him missing from my house in the morning, I feared that he might have gone for a bath and disturbed you. I came running, but it was a bit late!"

The speaker was an untouch-

able. Naturally, his relation, the boy, was an untouchable. The holy man took bath once again, for he had touched the untouchable in the process of slapping him.

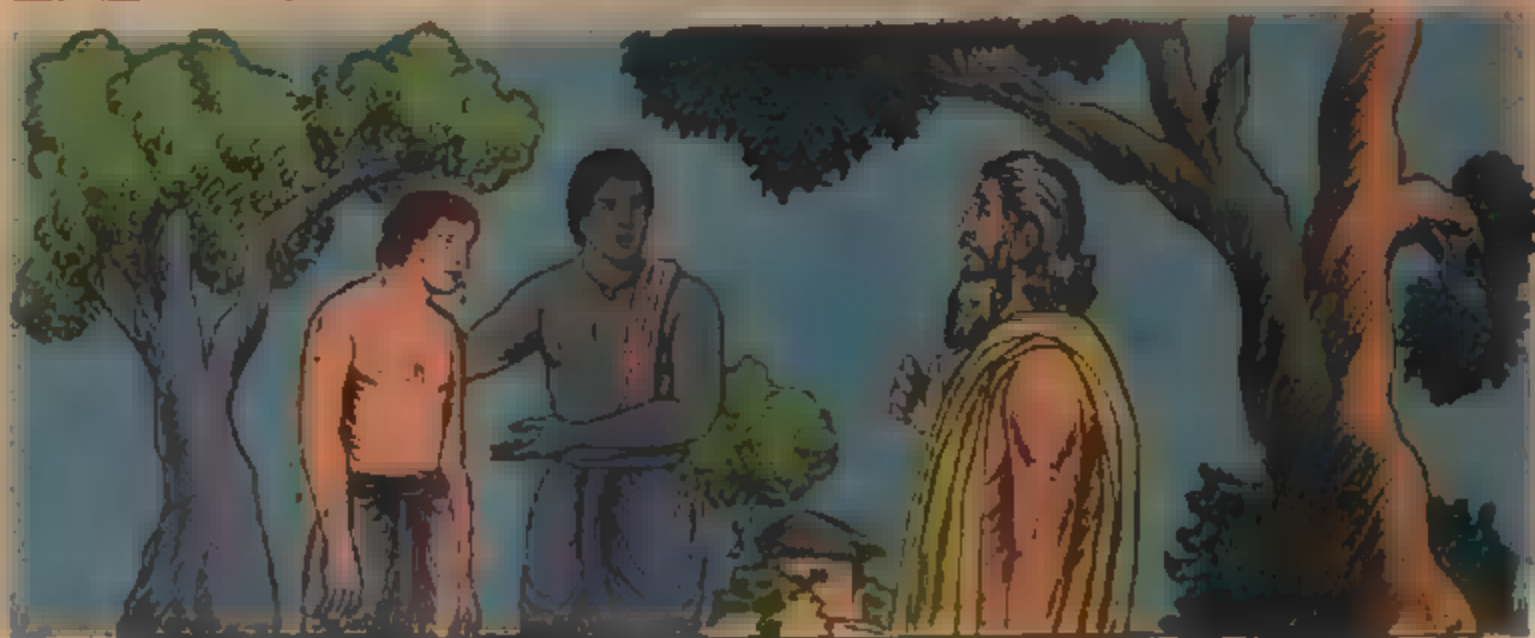
The boy who stood silent slowly entered the river once again and came out after a dip.

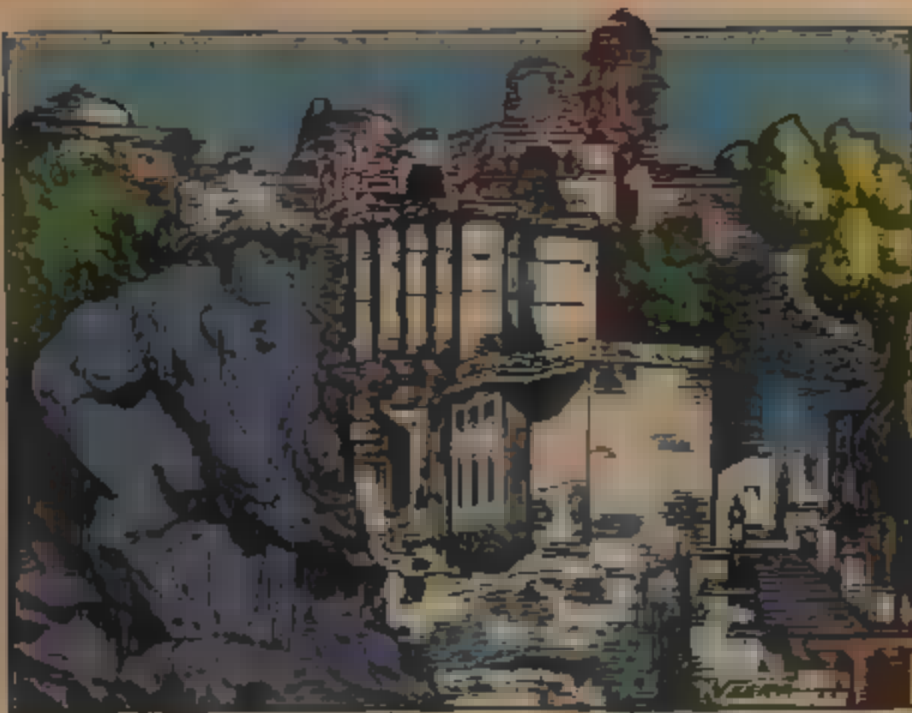
"What business had you to bathe again?" his brother-in-law asked him.

"For the same reason for which the holy man took bath for a second time. I saw Satan in him when he slapped me. Isn't Satan untouchable?" said the boy.

The holy man realised his folly. Slowly he approached the boy and said, "Indeed, I had been possessed by the Satan of anger. If anybody was untouchable, it was I, not you."

Then he embraced the boy.



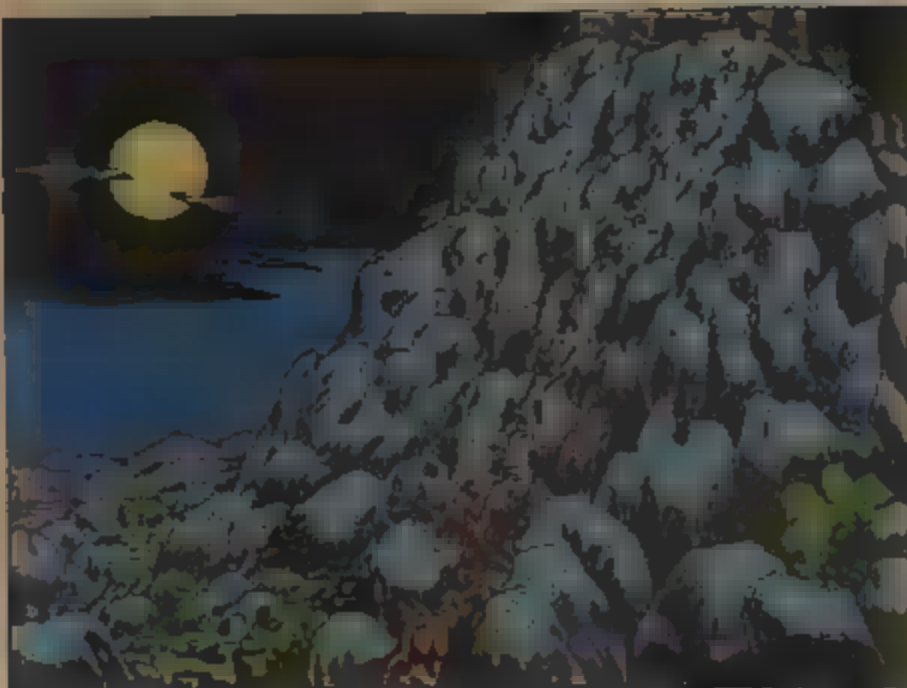


MONUMENTS OF INDIA

CHITTORGARH

Situated on a 500-foot high hill spread over 700 acres is Chittorgarh in Rajasthan, one of the most eventful forts of India. This has been a residence of the mighty since legendary times—dating back to the Pandava Bhishma who is said to have lived here for a while.

Historically, a Maurya King named Chitrangada had established his headquarters here. The hill was then named Chitrakoot which became popularly known as Chittor. Chitrangada's fort disappeared long ago.

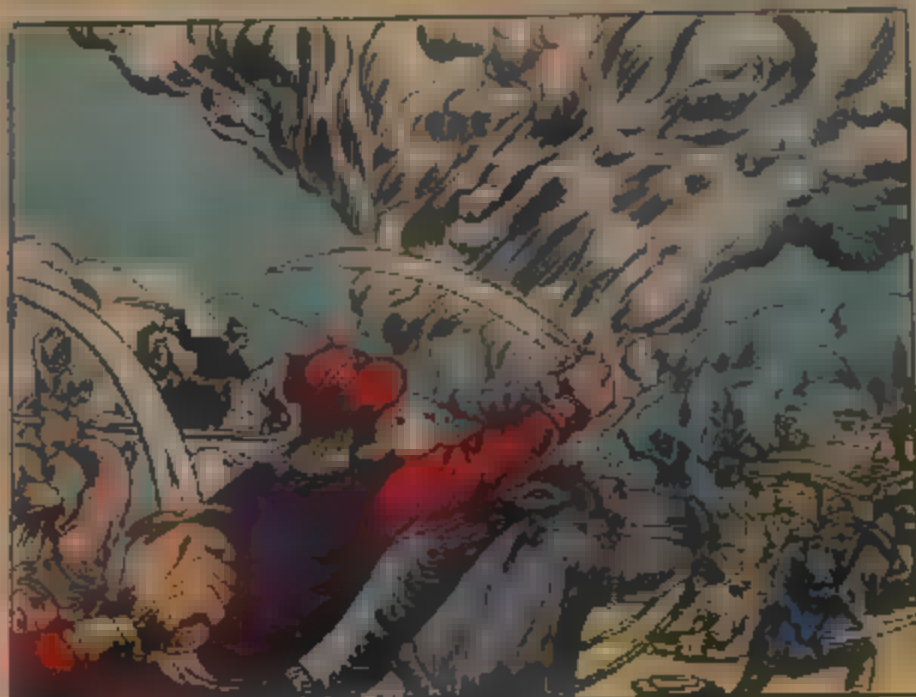


The Rawal rulers hailing from the region made this the capital of Mewar in the 12th century. In the 13th century Rawal Ratan Singh ruled the kingdom. The fame of the beauty and wit of his queen, Padmini, spread far and wide. Alauddin Khilji, Sultan of Delhi, attacked the fort to win her.



Unable to take over the fort, Khilji camped below the hill and prayed to have a look at Rani Padmini. He was allowed to see her reflection in a mirror. As Rawal Ratan came out to see him off, the treacherous Khilji's men lying in ambush captured him.

Khilji sent message that he will kill Rawal Ratan unless he got Rani Padmini. He was told that the Rani will surrender to him, in the company of her 700 maids. Khilji was very happy. The procession of palanquins began.



Once inside Khilji's camp, 1400 Rajput soldiers emerged from the palanquins. The bearers too turned into soldiers. In a few minutes Khilji's camp was in shambles. The captive Rawal was set free. Most of the enemy soldiers got killed. Khilji fled with his life.

The desperate Alauddin Khilji raised a bigger army and attacked the fort the next year once again. After a valiant resistance, the Rajputs found that it will not be possible to win the war. Instead of surrendering, each one fought till his death. In time Rani Padmini and other women sacrificed themselves in a fire.



Meerabai, the famous lyricist and devotee of Krishna, was a Princess of Jodhpur, married to Bhojraj of Chittor. Her husband built for her a Krishna temple. She sang her own composition before the idol in ecstasy.

It was in this fort that Panna, the faithful maid, saved the infant prince in her charge by showing to the assassin her own infant son. She had smuggled the sleeping prince out of the fort in time.





The fort of Chittor is in ruins. Still there are highly impressive monuments to be seen. The most attractive of them is the Victory Tower, built by Maharana Kumbha in 1448, to commemorate his victory in his war with Kutubuddin Shah, the Sultan of Gujarat.

The palace of Maharana Kumbha is a huge edifice, built with care for defending the fort. There are secret ways and tunnels leading to quite distant spots. Rani Padmini had sacrificed herself in an underground hall here.



Kalikamata's temple is perhaps the oldest shrine in Chittor. Mother Kalika became the presiding deity of the place. The shrine was perhaps dedicated to the Sun-God in a more remote era.



THE MINISTER MEETS HIS MATCH

When the Crown Prince Sursingh ascended the throne of Yashodapur at his father's demise, he had to depend heavily upon the old minister. Sursingh's father had great respect for the minister. There was no doubt that the minister was a wise adviser. But he had one weakness: he had no respect for poets and scholars.

The departed King had always welcomed poets with open arms. Now and then he would call a conference of poets and listen to their poetry and musings with rapt attention. The minister thoroughly disliked all this. But he did not dare protest against the King's wishes. But now the minister felt bold enough to speak to the young king about the futility of such things.

One day he told Sursingh,

"My Lord, your father had been too generous with the poets. He used to reward them lavishly and give away costly gifts. Too much has been spent on them. That was all a waste. What good can poets do to us?"

Sursingh did not agree with the minister but he did not contradict him either. After all the minister meant well.

The minister interpreted the King's silence as a sign of his agreement with his opinion of poets. Thereafter the minister behaved in such a rude and forbidding fashion with the poets that they eventually stopped coming to the royal court.

One day while the King and the minister were together, a young man came and greeted them and said, looking at the King, "My Lord, my grandfather Dayasharma was the



chief poet in the court of your grandfather. My father Jaysharma could not serve the King because of his illness. The condition of my family is bad. By the grace of Goddess Saraswati, I have my grandfather's gift of writing poetry. Pray, take me under your protection."

Dayasharma had contributed greatly to the pride and honour of the kingdom of Yashodapur and his poetry was immortal. Sursingh was grieved at the thought of the family's poverty. He was about to say something when the minister said, "Young man, your grandfather was certainly a great man. But you are

young and strong. You should make a living by doing some physical labour. What will you gain by writing poetry?"

The young man was surprised. "Sir, I am ready to do anything for a living. But isn't it best to make a living by doing what one is most talented in? How can man's finer senses develop without poetry and scholarly discussion? I shall be happy if I get a chance to serve my King and my kingdom through my talent. If that is not possible then I am ready to undertake any physical work!"

"In respect of Dayasharma's memory we must provide this man with some work or the other," said the King to the minister.

"Look here, young man," said the minister. "Your grandfather might have been a great poet. But if you expect to gain by selling the names of your father and grandfather, then you are mistaken. There is a vacancy in our stables, since the death of one of our stable-keepers. Are you ready to take up the job?"

"Minister, Sir, I haven't come here to gain by disclosing the names of my father and grand-

father. I only did it by way of introduction. I ■ a poet myself. You can test me. If you cannot accept me as ■ poet then I am prepared to accept the position of a stable boy," said the young man.

The minister got suddenly angry. "My Lord," he burst out, "this young man is not of good intent. In spite of being educated and hailing from scholarly family he is prepared to work in the stables. There is mystery behind this!"

The King and the young man both looked at the minister, confused.

"What could be the mys-

tery?" asked the King.

"This young man wants to tarnish the image of our kingdom. If he works as a stable boy, people will say that in the kingdom of Yashodapur poets are given no respect. They are made to work as stable boys," said the minister.

The young man turned to the King and said, "My Lord, it was not my suggestion that I be a stable boy. It came from the minister. I only sought your patronage. But my education and conscience have taught me this much that any honest work is honourable—even if it is ■ stable-keeper's job. Whatever





may be, there is a difference between the minister's viewpoint and mine. I'll tell you only if I am asked to."

"Let's hear it," said the King.

"The minister thinks that the people will say that the poets are disliked in this kingdom; that's why they are made to work as stable boys. I think that people will say that even the stable boy of the King of Yashodapur is a poet! Such is the love of poetry in the kingdom which abounds in poets!" said the young man.

The King burst into laughter and so did the minister. The old minister patted the young man on the back and said, "I was testing you, my son. You have been successful."

Then the minister said to the King, "This man is as gentle as he is intelligent. Retain him in any capacity—as a poet or as a courtier—but he is worthy of giving you counsel."

King Sursingh made the young man his court-poet. In course of time he became the King's Chief Minister.

A smart little girl entered the library and said, "Give me a good book."

"Do you want light-reading or..."

"Light or heavy does not really matter. My brother is there outside to carry it for me."



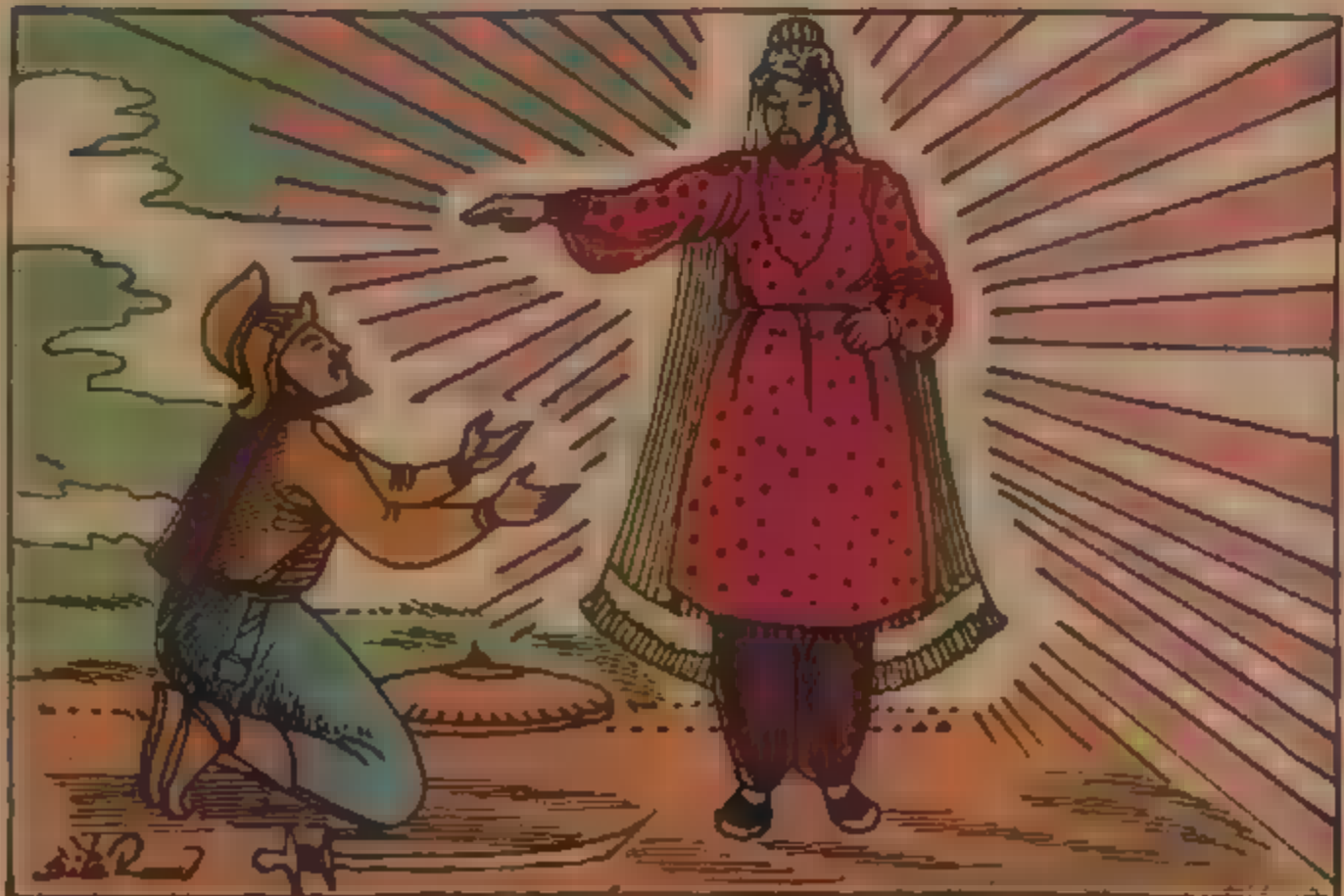
THE GENERAL AND THE TARGET

General Ming was commanding an army because he came of a family of landlords. But he knew only too well that he was no match for the enemy general.

But something strange happened. Just when he was about to make a retreat, he saw a luminous Being standing by his side and fighting on his behalf. Nobody else saw the Being.

General Ming won the war. He bowed to the Being and said, "Who are you, Lord? What had I done to earn your favour?"

"I'm the Being of Target. I was obliged to you because all your life you never hit me!" said the Being as he disappeared.





THE LAST STORY

Sanjay was on his way to the town. He decided to spend his night in ■ inn near a bazaar.

Now, in that bazaar lived four friends who loved to swindle strangers. In the morning they ■■ that Sanjay had ■ costly shawl on his shoulder. "We will oblige him to part with it," they decided.

They went to Sanjay and talked pleasantly to him. When they knew that Sanjay had become friendly towards them, they said, "Dear friend, ■ play a kind of game. Each one narrates ■ story. If, by any chance one of the listeners says that it was improbable, then he is required to give away his shawl or shirt. Should we play that game now?"

"Why not!" said Sanjay.

The first of the four friends

said, "while I was in my mother's womb, one night my mother expressed a desire to eat a certain fruit. The fruit was to be found atop ■ tall tree. Nobody was willing to climb that tree. When my mother fell asleep, I quietly went out of her womb, climbed the tree, plucked the fruit and left it by the side of my mother. Then I re-entered her womb."

When the story ended Sanjay nodded showing that he accepted it as true. The other three also nodded.

Then came the turn for the second friend to tell his story. He began, "Once when I was only seven days old, I felt like eating mangoes from ■ tree. I climbed it but was unable to climb down. So I went home brought a ladder and put it

against the tree and then climbed down".

Again Sanjay nodded. The other's too indicated that they had accepted the story as true.

Then the third friend narrated, "Once I ■■■ walking alone when a tiger jumped upon me. I took his fore legs into my grip and tore the beast into two".

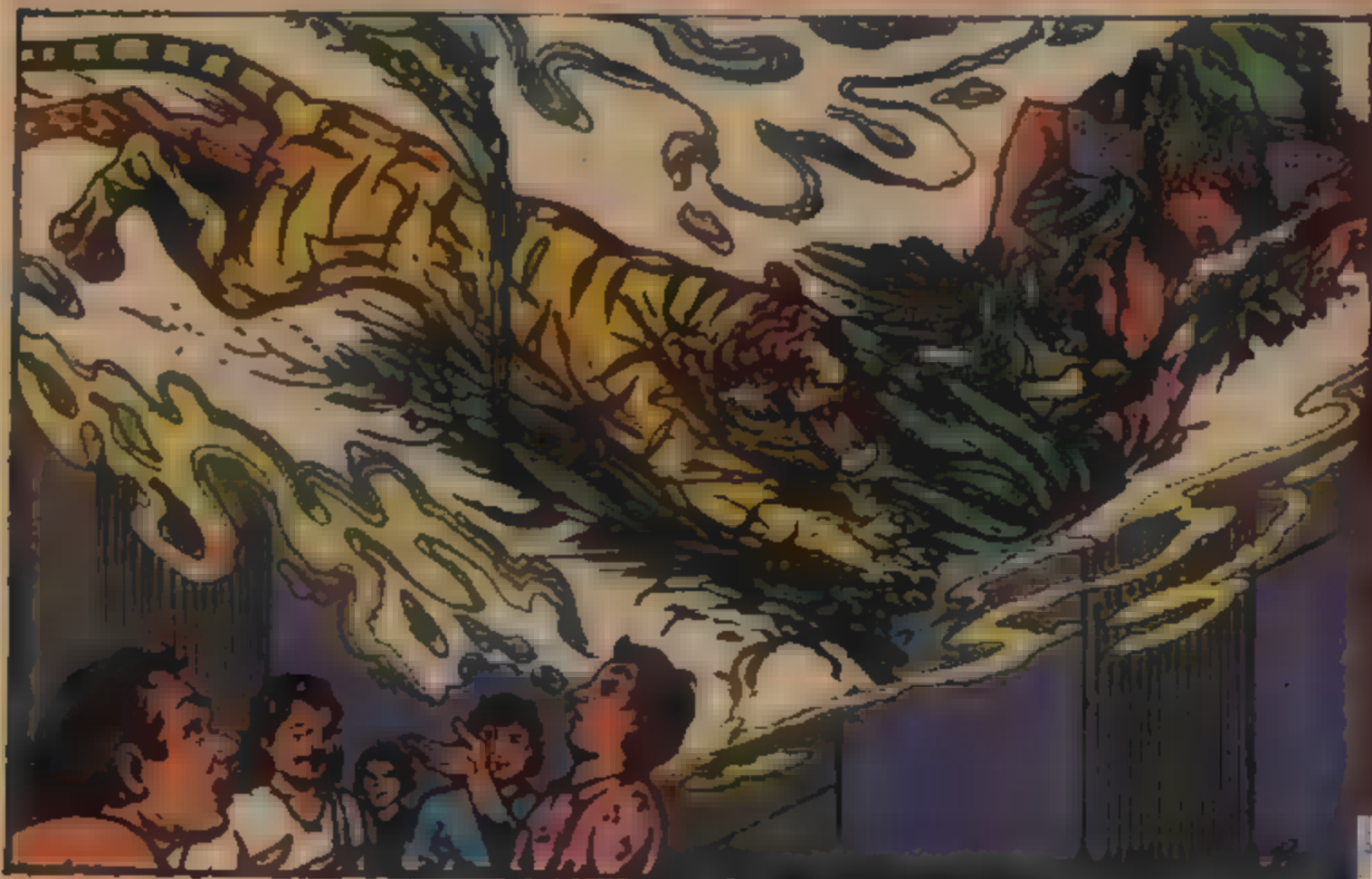
Again Sanjay nodded. Others did the ■■■■

The fourth one said, "While boating in a river ■ felt hungry. I jumped into the water and reached the bottom of the river. There I found a fish ■ big ■ ■ hillock. ■ lighted ■ fire then and

there, roasted it and ate it to my heart's content. Then I floated and boarded my boat once again".

Sanjay said nothing but showed that he had accepted the story ■ true. The other's too did the same.

Failing to trick Sanjay, ■■■ they asked him to tell a story. Said Sanjay, "Once I got ■ strange fruit from a sage. I buried it in my courtyard. A plant grew out of it. In ■■■■ of time it bore four fruits. When they burst, out of them emerged four boys. They grew up to be young ■■■■ and they worked for me ■ my slaves. One day they





fled from my house. Out in search of them, only today I found them. Here they are—you four lads!”

Now it was a strange situation for the four friends. If they say that Sanjay’s story was not true they have to forfeit their shirts. If they say that the story was true, they have to accompany Sanjay and his slaves.

Sanjay demanded, “Tell me,

do you accept my story as true? If you follow me and do as I say!”

The four friends said that they did not accept the story as true. According to the rule of the game they took off their shirts and surrendered them to Sanjay and quietly went their way. Those who saw them doing so looked with surprise as Sanjay left the inn with what he had gained.

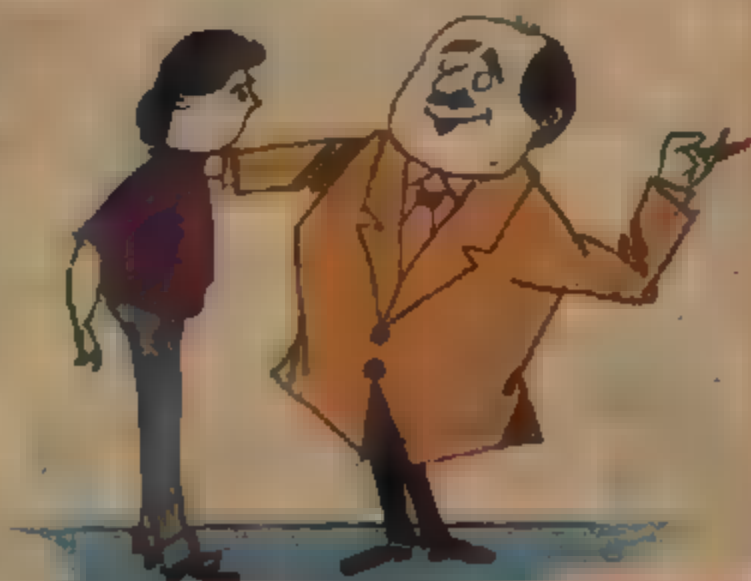
“My boy, said a successful businessman to his son, “there are two things that are most important if you want to succeed in business—honesty and wisdom.”

“Will you please explain, father?”

“No matter what happens, always keep your word if you have given it. That is honesty.”

“And Wisdom?”

“Never give your word.”



MEN WHO INVADE OUR SPEECH

"If Mr. Roy was rather quixotic in his conduct. Mr. Pradhan was quite Machiavellian. No wonder that the majority of the party would boycott both. The President of the party was sandwiched between the two. This is what the report says. Grandpa, I understand what is quixotic. It is from Don Quixote. I have read that amusing book. But what is Machiavellian?" asked Rajesh.

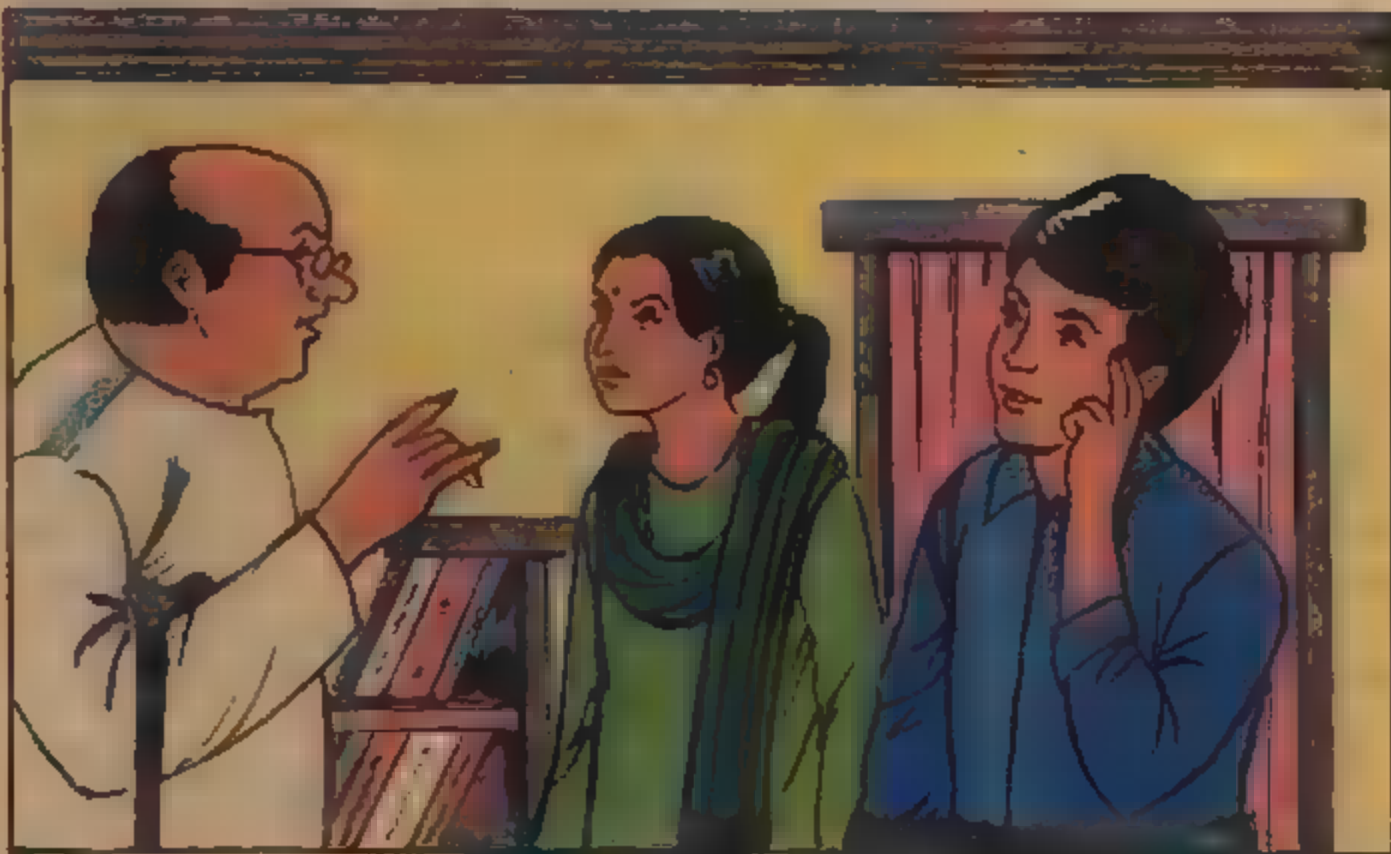
Replied Grandpa Chowdury, "Just as the word quixotic comes from Don Quixote, the other word comes from Niccolo Machiavelli, an Italian writer-diplomat of the 16th century. The adjective is hardly complimentary. It means cunning and often selfish, to obtain a certain end."

"I see! The report carries two words made from real human beings!" observed Reena.

"No, Reena, the report contains more than two words. Boycott is from a 19th century gentleman, Captain Boycott. Sandwich from an 18th century nobleman, the Earl of Sandwich who ate the kind of preparation which later became known by his name. Still later the word meant being squeezed between two others," said the Grandpa.

"How many proper nouns must have stretched themselves beyond their original meaning!" wondered Rajesh.

"Many, Rajesh, many," said Grandpa Chowdhury.





Is it true that Shah Jahan cut off the hands of those masons who built the Taj Mahal, ■ that they would never ■ able to construct any structure of its kind?

—Sanjay Chanda,
Bombay

It is not true. Shah Jahan was an enthusiastic builder and he needed craftsmen and masons to build new monuments for his new capital in Delhi after the Taj Mahal had been built ■ his old capital, Agra. Besides, masons only carried out the instruction of the architect Ustad I'sa who was probably assisted by some French and Italian experts. Some modern scholars are of the view that Taj Mahal was an older building modified by the architects of Shah Jahan. Hence the emperor cutting off the hands of the masons is only a folktale.

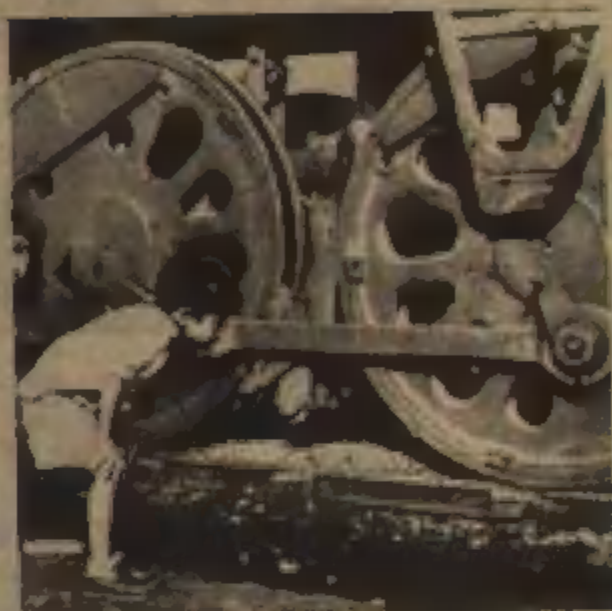
Is there any historical evidence for the existence of Rama and Krishna?

—Dhananjay Patro,
Bhubaneswar.

In the history of the entire world there are no two mythical characters with which so many living traditions are associated as with Rama and Krishna. Cities, places, dynasties, festivals, customs and ideals are included in these traditions. There was never ■ break in these traditions; since the recorded time no school of thought or chronology has ever disputed these associations. There ■ communities in the far north which worship Duryodhana as their deity because their king had sided with the Kauravas. If Duryodhana was no real character and only the villain of the Mahabharata, it is impossible that he would occupy this position.

Hence though evidence like a stone inscription is not available, the traditions are strong enough to be rationally accepted ■ evidence in favour of the historicity of these characters.

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



M. Natarajan



P. Balasubramanian

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs.50/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

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The Winning Entry:— 'Festive Wonder' & 'Youthful Splendour'

PICKS FROM THE WISE

The rule in carving holds good as to criticism; never cut with a knife what you can cut with a spoon.

—Charles Buxton

Even the lion has to defend himself against flies.

—German Proverb

Think that day lost whose low descending

Views from thy hand no worthy action done.

—Anonymous



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